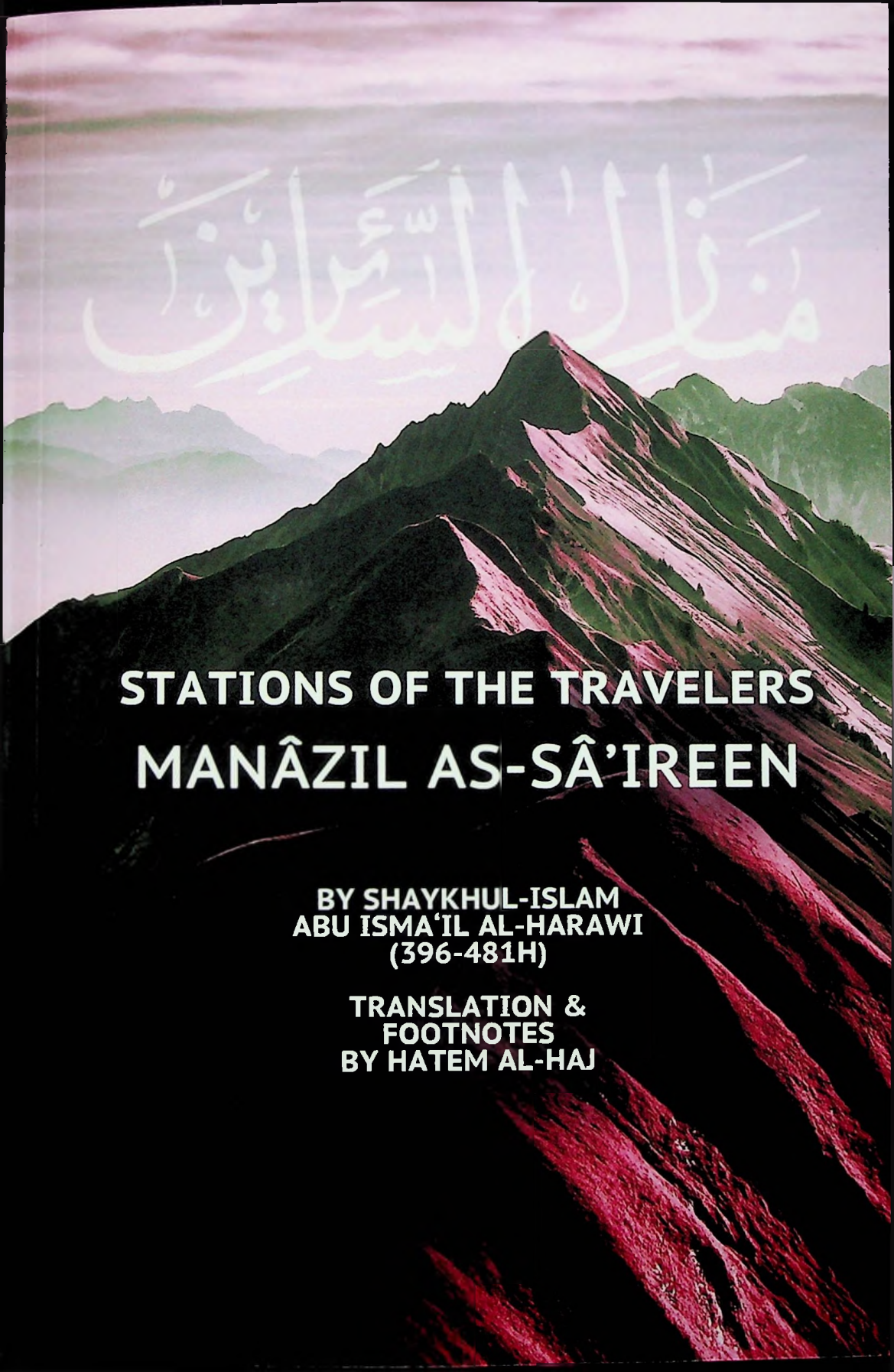

STATIONS OF THE TRAVELERS

MANÂZIL AS-SÂ'IREEN

BY SHAYKHUL-ISLAM
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(396-481H)

TRANSLATION &
FOOTNOTES
BY HATEM AL-HAJ

STATIONS OF THE TRAVELERS

Manâzil as-Sâ'ireen

Imam Abu Ismâ'eel
'Abdullâh ibn Muhammad
al-Anṣâri al-Harawi
(396–481 H./ 1006–1089 CE.)

Translation and Footnotes
By Hatem al-Haj

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Translator's Introduction

Sufism is a loaded term. It can evoke a wide spectrum of emotions in us, depending on our ideological orientations. While the term itself was not coined by the Prophet ﷺ or even the Companions, the discipline of knowledge that addresses the actions of the heart and purification of the soul has come to be referred to by many scholars as *'taṣawwuf.' Taṣawwuf* and Sufism became names not only for the science, but its referents and subject matter: the actions of the heart and the inner states. How could this be a subject of controversy with conflicting reports about it from the major scholars? This has to do with the history and evolution of the movement.

During the time of the Companions, there was seamless harmony between knowledge and practice, the exterior and the interior, and rituals and spirituality. After their time, a gulf started to form between these concepts, where many people became overindulgent in the pleasures of this life and heedless about their hearts and inner states due to the prosperity enjoyed by Muslims of the successive generations and the relative fading of the light of revelation. Even some scholars were more attentive to intellectual resourcefulness and legal technicality than to spirituality. As a response to this, some of the earlier pious predecessors started to emphasize concepts they felt were endangered. The emphasis here was on

asceticism and the purification of the soul. The earlier masters were compliant with the *Shari'ah*. However, as time went by, many claimants of *taṣawwuf* added many innovations to their practice; more perilously, many adopted concepts that were imported from other religions and philosophies, such as existential union.

The deviations that ensued may have had earlier unintended triggers. For example, because the earlier masters wanted to highlight the inadequacy of knowledge without commitment and practice, some later began to undermine the epistemic value of the Revelation in favor of correct but abused concepts like *dhawq* (taste) and *ilhâm* (inspiration). Some even created a dichotomy between the *Shari'ah* (scriptural instructions) acquired through learning and the *ḥaqeeqah* (reality) captured by the hearts of the *'ârifeen* (knowers). This would result into a cultish attitude among many seekers, making their sheikhs' findings the standard of truth. Because the earlier masters wanted to highlight the oneness of God and His absolute control, some later undermined the agency of humans, which would lead some to conflate Allah's universal decrees with His legal commands. This would ultimately result in indifference, pacifism, and antinomianism.

Because of these deviations and others, it is not uncommon to find the dispraise of Sufis in the discourse of the greatest scholars, starting with no less than Imam ash-Shâfi'i and some of his contemporaries who did not even witness the worst

innovations or heresies yet to be propagated. Other scholars looked at the pure beginnings and were impressed by the devotion and manners of many masters and seekers, so they followed them; some exaggerated in their praise and some were even unable to see their flaws and attempted to justify them.

What did the scholars who dispraised them mean, and what is the right stance? I believe that the dispraise of some scholars and the praise of others need to be contextualized. While some issues may be controversial among the scholars themselves, most are not. The praise and dispraise were both valid, but they pertained to different iterations of *taṣawwuf*. A most balanced synthesis can be found in these words of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be bestow mercy on him):

> Because of the disagreements over their *ijtihâds*, people disagreed over their paths. A group condemned Sufism and said they are innovators who departed from the Sunnah. This was reported from many imams whose statements in this regard are known. A group of *fuqahâ'* and the scholars of *kalâm* (speculative theology) followed them in this opinion. Another group exaggerated in their praise and claimed they are the best of all creations and the most complete in virtue after the prophets. And the two extremes in judging these matters are blameworthy.

The correct position is that they excel in obedience towards Allah, as others excel. Some of them are among the vanguard, congruent with their effort, and some are average among the people of the right hand (*ahl al-yameen*). In both groups, there are those who commit errors in their *ijtihâd*; some repent while others do not. Also, of those who claim to be of them are those who transgress themselves and disobey their Lord. And some of the innovators and blasphemous groups have attached themselves to them. The verifying scholars of the Sufis, however, do not recognize these groups and individuals to be of them. Al-Ḥallâj, for example, was rejected and called out of the path by the majority of the sheikhs, such as al-Junayd ibn Muhammad, the master of the assembly *(sayyid aṭ-ṭâ'ifah)*, and others, as reported by Sheikh Abu 'Abdir-Raḥmân as-Sulamiy in his *Ṭabaqât aṣ-Ṣoofiyah* and as al-Ḥâfidh Abu Bakr al-Khaṭeeb mentioned in *Târeekh Baghdâd.*

This is the original *taṣawwuf.* Then, after that it split up into groups and the Sufis became of three strands: *ṣoofiyat al-ḥaqâ'iq* (realities), *ṣoofiyat al-arzâq* (monetary gains), and *ṣoofiyat ar-rasm* (formalities). As to the *ṣoofiyat al-ḥaqâ'iq,* they are the ones we have described.

As for the *ṣoofiyat al-arzâq*, they are the ones who had endowments set up for them, such as the *khanqahs.* They are not necessarily of the people of the knowledge

of realities (*ḥaqâ'iq*), for that is mighty and rare. The majority of the people of *ḥaqâ'iq* are not known to abide in the *khanqahs*. However, there are three prerequisites [for them to deserve sustenance from the endowments]: the first is *shar'ī* integrity in that they fulfil the obligatory acts and abstain from the prohibitions; the second is adhering to the etiquettes (*âdâb*) of the people of the path most of the time, and these are the etiquettes of *Shari'ah*. As for the fabricated and innovated etiquettes, they do not matter; and the third is that they do not hoard any excesses of worldly material. As to he who hoards wealth or does not have praiseworthy manners and does not adhere to the *shar'ī* etiquettes or is a *fâsiq*, then he is not deserving of that.

As for *ṣoofiyat ar-rasm* (formalities), they are limited to the attire and fabricated etiquettes, etc. Their likeness among the Sufis is the likeness of those who merely wear the attire of the people of knowledge and the people of jihad and imitate some of their speech and actions in a way that makes the one who does not know their reality assume that they are of them, but they are not. (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmoo' al-Fatâwâ*, 11:17-20)

What should we do, then, with a legacy that is filled with pearls and jewels mixed with rocks and sometimes

scorpions and snakes? Three questions will need to be answered.

The first is whether we can afford *not* to talk about spirituality, the inner states, the actions of the heart, manners and etiquettes, etc.? The answer to this is a resounding "No"—by agreement. It is also hoped that we all agree on the prime importance of putting more emphasis on these aspects of religiosity. It seems that the contemporary "Islamic Awakening" suffers a great deal because of insufficient emphasis on these core teachings of Islam.

The second is whether we can afford to find all of what we need of these teachings away from the heritage of the masters who are identified as Sufis? The answer to this is not as clear as that to the first question, because it may be said that the four Imams and their contemporaries who were not identified as Sufis and their predecessors and followers have not ignored the inner states as some may think. Despite that, it is still clear to me that we cannot afford to ignore the heritage of the greatest and purest of the earlier masters, such as Ma'roof al-Karkhi, Sariy as-Saqaṭi, Abu al-Qâsim al-Junayd, Abu Sulaymân ad-Darâni, Sahl al-Tustari, and their likes, or even al-Harawi, al-Jeelâni, Abu al-Bayân, Abu Madyan, Ibn 'Aṭâ', and their likes. Can you imagine *Madârij as-Sâlikeen* purged of their wisdom?

The third is whether we need to call this discipline or path Sufism or *taṣawwuf*? The answer to this is even less clear than the answer to the second question. The reason for its unclarity goes back to several factors, foremost among them is that this term was not coined by the Prophet ﷺ or his Companions; in fact, we do not even know who coined it and what it is derived from, despite the many theories in this respect. Secondly, the term *tazkiyah* is what Allah used in the Qur'an to refer to the purification of the soul; why should we not, then, use the Qur'anic term? Thirdly, why should we use a term that does not have an agreed-upon standard definition and which may be used to refer to utterly heretical concepts?

My answer to this is multifold. First, I prefer the use of the Qur'anic term *'tazkiyah.'* Second, I believe (as stated by the masters of the path) that one should never call oneself a Sufi, because this is like calling oneself pious or devout. Third, I still believe that we should remove the sensitivity against the word *taṣawwuf* because it is irrational to wage a war against a term that could mean various things. Waging a war against the term will also cause novices aversion to the valuable heritage of those who were identified as Sufis. Finally, the aversion of the people of *fiqh* and Hadith to the use of the term will allow ignorant and blasphemous groups to hijack it and take uncontested ownership of it. This

means they will be the spokespersons of a legacy that is integral to our *deen* and entrenched in our heritage.

The proper approach to *taṣawwuf* is, then, a loving yet critical examination of its heritage. I argue that this was the true Taymiyyan approach. The scholarly community needs to embrace the Sufi legacy and transfuse it with emphasis on:

1. strict adherence to the Revelation
2. prioritizing the understanding and practice of the first community
3. prioritizing clarity vs. symbolism (al-Junayd vs. al-Kharrâz; may Allah have mercy on them)
4. leaving out that which causes doubt for that which causes no doubt
5. calling out departures from the path of the upright *mashayikh (Ahl al-Istiqâmah)*

This book, *Manâzil as-Sâ'ireen*, is a masterpiece of *taṣawwuf* written by Imam Abu Ismâ'eel 'Abdullâh ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Anṣâri al-Harawi, one of the greatest orthodox Sunni Sufi masters of all times. This book is highly appraised by the scholars and masters of *taṣawwuf*. Many commentaries have been written on it, indicating its great status and importance. The reason I chose to translate it despite its symbolism, which is a result of its brevity and the sheikh's inclination towards linguistic finesse, is that the sheikh was a strict Hanbali in his *fiqh* and Athari (scripturalist) in his creed. This makes it easier to give his statements a

Shari'ah-compliant interpretation. Those who wish to hijack them will have a lot to explain, given the sheikh's biography and legacy.

Additionally, no one embodied this loving and critical approach to the sciences of *taṣawwuf* and demonstrated it more than Imam Ibn al-Qayyim in his commentary on this book, *Madârij as-Sâlikeen*. While I referred to many commentaries on the *Manâzil*, including the rather brief commentaries by Imams al-Lakhmi and al-Munâwi, I owe most of my understanding of it to *Madârij as-Sâlikeen*. Despite this, I take full responsibility for any errors in the footnotes I have provided for clarification. They are not necessarily extracted from any of those books.

Finally, for a more detailed explanation of the book, please refer to the following website:
https://stationsofthetravelers.com.

INTRODUCTION

بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most
Gracious,
the Most Merciful

الْحَمدُ للهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ
القَيُّومِ الصَّمَدِ اللَّطِيفِ
الْقَرِيبِ، الَّذِي أَمْطَرَ
سَرَائِرَ العَارِفِينَ كَرَائِمَ
الْكَلِمِ مِنْ غَمَائِمِ الحِكَمِ،
وَأَلاحَ لَهُم لَوَائِحَ الْقِدَمِ فِي
صَفَائِحِ الْعَدَمِ، ودَلَّهُم عَلَى
أَقْرَبِ السُّبُلِ إِلَى الْمِنْهَاجِ
الأَوَّلِ، وَرَدَّهُم مِن تَفَرُّقِ
الْعِلَلِ إِلَى عَيْنِ الْأَزَلِ،
وَبَثَّ فِيهِم ذَخَائِرَهُ،
وَأَوْدَعَهُم سَرَائِرَهُ.

All praise be to Allah: the One, the Unique, the Sustainer, the Eternal, the Subtle, the Ever-Near; He Who sent down the noblest words [of guidance] unto the inner-conscience of the *'ârifeen*[1] from the clouds of wisdom and showed them, while they were in their [worldly] forms of nothingness,[2] flashes of the *qidam* (pre-eternity), and guided them to the nearest paths towards the original scheme,[3] and brought them back from dispersion[4] in the multiplicity of causes to the one essence of the *azal* (eternity in

[1] In the Sufi tradition, the '*'ârifeen*' (plural of '*'ârif*') refers to those endowed with beneficial knowledge of the heart, not merely technical knowledge of the intellect.

[2] This may also refer to the nothingness of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation). The concept of *fanâ'* is explained in the main text.

[3] The scheme of the origination of all things from nothingness by the True One.

[4] The concept of dispersion is clarified in the main text.

the past [*a parte ante*]),[5] and instilled in them His treasures, and entrusted them with His secrets.

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, alone, without partner: the First and the Last, the Topmost and the Innermost, He Who extends the shades of diversity over the creations[6] in abundance, and makes the sunshine of empowerment for the chosen a guide to Him, and gently contracts the shadows of dispersion away from them.[7] May His abundant blessings and peace be upon His most favored one, by whom He swore on establishing His truth—Muhammad—and his family and followers.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَن لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ الأَوَّلُ الآخِرُ الظَّاهِرُ الْبَاطِنُ الَّذِي مَدَّ ظِلَّ التَّلوينِ عَلى الْخَلِيقَةِ مَدًّا طَوِيلًا ثُمَّ جَعَلَ شَمْسَ التَّمْكِينِ لِصَفْوِيَّهِ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ثُمَّ قَبَضَ ظِلَّ التَّفْرِقَةِ عَنْهُم إِلَيْهِ قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا. وَصَلَاتُهُ وَسَلَامُهُ عَلى صَفِيِّهِ، الَّذِي أَقسَمَ بِهِ فِي إِقَامَةِ حَقِّهِ، مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ كَثِيرًا.

To proceed: a group of those who desire to discover the stations of the

وَبَعدُ فَإِنَّ جَمَاعَةً مِنَ الرَّاغِبِينَ فِي الْوُقُوفِ عَلَى

---

[5] From being overwhelmed by the diversity and multiplicity of the creations, causes, and effects to the realization of the oneness of the Origin and Ultimate Effector.

[6] All the creations, phenomena, relations, and causes around us.

[7] So that they are not overwhelmed or distracted by the multiplicity around them, but focus on the oneness of the Source, the First Cause, the Ultimate Effector, the First without beginning. He did this gradually so that they could go through the spiritual ascension to the highest levels without harm.

wayfarers to the True One (glorified be His name), of the *fuqarâ*[8] of Herat and outsiders, have been asking me for a long time to clarify these stations for them: a clarification that would delineate their topographies. So, I have responded to their request after seeking Allah's counsel and His help. They asked me to arrange them in a way that shows their proper order and subsequent branches. They also asked me to preclude any discourse that is not mine, and to summarize it for the ease of utterance and memorization.

مَنَازِلِ السَّائِرِينَ إِلَى الْحَقِّ
عَزَّ اسْمُهُ مِن الْفُقَرَاءِ مِن
أهلِ هِرَاة والغُرباءِ طَالَ
عَلَيَّ مَسْأَلَتُهُم إِيَّايَ زَمَانًا
أَنْ أُبَيِّنَ لَهُم فِي مَعْرِفَتِهَا
بَيَانًا يَكونُ عَلى مَعَالِمِها
عُنْوانًا فَأَجَبْتُهُم بِذَلِكَ بَعدَ
استِخارَتِي اللهَ واستِعَانَتِي
بِهِ. وسَألوني أَنْ أُرَتِّبَهَا
لَهُم تَرتيبًا يُشِيرُ إِلَى
تَوالِيهَا وَيَدُلُّ عَلَى الْفُرُوعِ
الَّتِي تَلِيهَا وَأَنْ أُخَلِّيَهُ مِن
كَلَامِ غَيْرِي وأَخْتَصِرَهُ
لِيَكُونَ أَلطَفَ فِي اللَّفْظِ
وأَخَفَّ لِلْحِفْظِ.

I feared that if I embarked on explaining the statement of Abu Bakr al-Kattâni, "There are one thousand stations of light and darkness between the slave and the True One," that it would be too long for me and them. Therefore, I have mentioned only the bases of those stations that show the way to their fulfilment and the realization of their

وإِنِّي خِفْتُ أَنِّي إِنْ
أَخَذْتُ فِي شَرْحِ قَولِ أَبِي
بَكْرِ الكَتَّانِي إِنَّ بَينَ العَبْدِ
وَالْحَقِّ أَلْفُ مَقَامٍ مِن نُورٍ
وظُلْمَةٍ طَوَّلْتُ عَلَيَّ
وَعَلَيْهِم فَذَكَرتُ أَبْنِيَةَ تِلْكَ
المَقَامَاتِ الَّتِي تُشِيرُ إِلَى
تَمَامِهَا وتَدُلُّ عَلَى مَرَامِهَا
وَأَرْجُو لَهُم بَعدَ صِدقِ

[8] Plural of *faqeer* (poor). Another name for a Sufi. Some scholars make distinctions between them.

objectives. I hope for them,[9] once they purify their intent, what Abu 'Ubayd al-Busri said: "Allah has servants to whom He shows in their beginnings what is [destined for them] in their endings."

قَصْدِهِم مَا قَالَ أَبُو عُبَيْدٍ البُسْرِي "إِنَّ للهِ عِبَادًا يُرِيهِم فِي بِدَايَاتِهِم مَا فِي نِهَايَاتِهِم."

I have arranged it into chapters and sections for the sake of brevity and to avoid redundancy and the need for further inquiry. I made it one hundred stations, divided into ten sections.

ثُمَّ إِنِّي رَتَّبْتُهُ لَهُم فُصُولًا وأَبْوابًا يُغنِي ذَلِكَ التَّرْتِيبُ عَن التَّطْوِيلِ المُؤَدِّي إِلَى المَلالِ وَيكُونُ مَنْدُوحَةً عَن التَّسآلِ فَجَعَلتُهُ مِائَةَ مَقَامٍ مَقسُومَةً عَلى عَشَرَةِ أَقسَام.

Al-Junayd has said that a slave may be moved from one state to a higher one before fulfilling the one he/she moved from, then he/she looks at it from above and fixes it. In my view, the slave will not fulfill any station until he/she rises above it and looks at it from above and rectifies it.

وَقد قَالَ الْجُنَيْدُ قَدْ يُنْقَل العَبْد من حَال إِلَى حَال أرفع مِنْهَا وَقد بَقِيَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الَّتِي نُقِلَ عَنْهَا بَقِيَّةٌ فَيُشْرِفُ عَلَيْهَا مِن الْحَالةِ الثَّانِيَةِ فَيُصلِحُهَا. وَعِنْدِي أَنَّ العَبْدَ لَا يَصِحُّ لَهُ مَقَامٌ حَتَّى يَرْتَفِعَ عَنهُ ثُمَّ يُشرِفَ عَلَيْهِ فَيُصَحِّحَهُ.

Be aware, as well, that the wayfarers have extreme variances in their travel through these stations. There is no definitive order or end that keeps them together.[10]

وَاعْلَم أَن السَّائرين فِي هَذِهِ المَقَامَاتِ على اخْتِلَاف مُفْظِعٍ لَا يَجْمَعُهُمْ تَرْتِيبٌ قَاطِعٌ وَلَا يَقِفُهُم مُنْتَهًى جَامِعٌ.

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[9] Those who petitioned him to elucidate those stations.

[10] Someone may reach the highest levels of *tawakkul* (reliance), while still being behind in the station of *murâqabah* (watchfulness).

وَقَدْ صَنَّفَ جَمَاعَةٌ مِنَ الْمُتَقَدِّمِينَ وَالْمُتَأَخِّرِينَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ تَصَانِيفَ عَسَاكَ لَا تَرَاهَا أَوْ أَكْثَرَهَا عَلَى حُسْنِهَا مُغْنِيَةً كَافِيَةً. مِنْهُم مَنْ أَشَارَ إِلَى الْأُصُولِ وَلَم يَفِ بِالتَّفْصِيلِ. وَمِنْهُم مَنْ جَمَعَ الحِكَايَاتِ وَلَم يُلَخِّصْهَا تَلْخِيصًا وَلَمْ يُخَصِّصْ النُّكْتَةَ تَخْصِيصًا. وَمِنْهُم مَن لَمْ يُمَيِّزْ بَينَ مَقَامَاتِ الْخَاصَّةِ وضَرُورَاتِ الْعَامَّةِ.

A group of earlier and latter scholars have authored works in this discipline. Despite their excellence, you may not find them (or most of them) fulfilling or sufficient. Some have pointed out the foundations but have not addressed the details. A number of them gathered narrations but did not organize them and highlight the learning points. Some did not distinguish between the stations of the elites and the necessities of the public. A number of them considered the esoteric utterances of the spiritually overawed[11]

[11] About *shaṭaḥât:* Those who experience intense spiritual encounters and focus on the Divine to the point of self-dissolution may make esoteric utterances during such trances. While such utterances are not commendable and could be considered acts of disbelief if made outside of those states, many scholars, including Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah bestow mercy on him), maintained that those who make such utterances would be forgiven on account of their spiritual intoxication. He mentioned as an example of those *shaṭaḥât* the statement of Abu Yazeed al-Bisṭâmi, "Glory be to me." For those utterances to be forgiven, certain conditions must be fulfilled. They should be short, only a few words. The person who utters them regrets them uapon waking from the trance and even denies them, like Abu Yazeed (may Allah bestow His mercy on him) used to. The person must also be observant of the *Sunnah* and compliant with the *Shari'ah* in his/her religious practice. Finally, as

stations and considered mainstream those disclosures of the ecstatic and symbolisms of the established (masters). Most of them did not speak of the rankings.

وَمِنْهُم مَنْ عَدَّ شَطْحَ المَغلوبِ مقَامًا وَجَعَلَ بَوْحَ الْوَاجِدِ وَرَمْزَ المُتَمَكِّنِ شَيْئًا عَامًّا. وَأَكْثَرُهم لَمْ يَنْطِقْ عَن الدَّرَجَاتِ.

Know that most of the scholars of this community and the guides to this path have agreed that the endings will not be rectified without the rectification of the beginnings, just like buildings will not stand except on solid foundations.

وَاعْلَمْ أن الْعَامَّةَ مِنْ عُلَمَاءِ هَذِهِ الطَّائِفَةِ والمُشيرينَ إِلَى هَذِهِ الطَّرِيقَةِ اتَّفقُوا عَلى أَنَّ النِّهاياتِ لَا تصِحُّ إِلَّا بِتَصحيحِ البِدايَاتِ كَمَا أَنَّ الْأَبْنِيَةَ لَا تَقُومُ إِلَّا عَلى الأَسَاسِ.

The rectification of the beginnings is about the establishment of one's affair on the observation of devotion and the adherence to the *Sunnah*, as well as esteeming the prohibitions upon the contemplation of fear, the honoring of the sacred, and having empathy for the

وَتَصْحِيحُ البَدايَاتِ هُوَ إِقَامَةُ الْأَمْرِ عَلى مُشَاهدَةِ الْإِخْلَاصِ وَمُتابَعَةِ السُنَّةِ وتَعْظِيمِ النَّهْيِ عَلى مُشَاهَدَةِ الْخَوْفِ ورِعايَةِ

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah clarified, such utterances were not reported from the best of Allah's creations: the prophets and the Companions. This is because of the strength of their recognition and intellect and their ability to behold the multiplicity of phenomena and creations while being fully aware of the oneness of the Creator, the Eternal, the True One (glorious is He). Such complete recognition protected them from being overcome by any spiritual trance. *Baqâ'* (subsistence) by Allah, with Allah, for Allah is higher than *fanâ'* (self-annihilation).

creations. This can be realized by extending sincere advice without being a burden, and while avoiding any companion that squanders time and any matter that corrupts the heart.

الْحُرْمَةِ والشَّفَقَةِ عَلى الْعَالَمِ بِبَذْلِ النَّصِيحَةِ وَكَفِّ الْمُؤْنَةِ وَمُجَانَبَةِ كُلِّ صَاحِبٍ يُفْسِدُ الْوَقْتَ وَكُلِّ سَبَبٍ يَفْتِنُ الْقَلْبَ.

Know, as well, that people are of three types concerning this affair [*tazkiyah*/Sufism]:

عَلَى أَنَّ النَّاسَ فِي هَذَا الشَّأْنِ ثَلَاثَةُ نَفَرٍ:

A person who works through fear and hope, with his or her eyes fixated on the love [of the Divine] that is joined with modesty. This is the one who is called a *mureed* (a seeker).

رَجُلٌ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ الْخَوْفِ والرَّجَاءِ شَاخِصًا إِلَى الْحُبِّ مَعَ صُحْبَةِ الْحَيَاءِ، فَهَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَمَّى الْمُرِيدَ.

A person who is abducted from the valley of dispersion to the valley of unity.[12] This is the one who is called a *murâd*.[13]

وَرَجُلٌ مُخْتَطَفٌ مِنْ وَادِي التَّفَرُّقِ إِلَى وَادِي الْجَمْعِ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُقَالُ لَهُ الْمُرَادُ.

Anyone else is merely a seduced, self-deluded pretender.

وَمَنْ سِوَاهُمَا مُدَّعٍ مَفْتُونٌ مَخْدُوعٌ.

All these stations belong to one of three rankings:

وَجَمِيعُ هَذِهِ الْمَقَامَاتِ تَجْمَعُهَا رُتَبٌ ثَلَاثٌ:

The first one is the beginning of the march by the seeker.

الرُّتْبَةُ الأُولَى أَخْذُ الْقَاصِدِ فِي السَّيْرِ.

الرُّتْبَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ دُخُولُهُ فِي

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[12] Meaning dispersion in the valleys of vanity. The togetherness of the heart will be only with its Maker.

[13] *Murâd* literally means 'wanted.' This is the one Allah chooses and invites to subsist only with Him and for Him. He is not struggling like the first one. He is being drawn to the Divine by the Divine Himself.

. The second is his/her entry into exile.[14]
. The third is his/her beholding [of the Truth] that charms them towards the heart of *tawḥeed* on the way to *fanâ'* (self-annihilation).[15]

الغُرْبَةِ.
الرُّتْبَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ حُصُولُهُ عَلَى الْمُشَاهدَةِ الجَاذِبَةِ إِلَى عَيْنِ التَّوْحِيدِ فِي طَرِيقِ الفَنَاءِ.

Concerning the meaning of the first ranking, al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Farâ'idi told us that Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ḥasnawayh told him that al-Ḥusayn ibn Idrees al-Anṣâri said: 'Uthmân ibn Abi Shaybah narrated to us that Muhammad ibn Bishr al-'Abdi said: 'Umar ibn Râshid narrated to us from Yaḥyâ ibn Abi Katheer from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

وَقَد أَخْبَرَنَا فِي مَعْنَى الرُّتْبَةِ الأُولَى الْحُسَيْن بن مُحَمَّد بن عَلِيّ الْفَرَائِضِي قَالَ أخبرنَا أَحْمد بن مُحَمَّد بن حَسْنَوَيْهِ قَالَ أخبرنَا الْحُسَيْن بن إِدْرِيس الْأَنْصَارِيّ قَالَ حَدثنَا عُثْمَان بن أبي شَيْبَةَ قَالَ حَدثنَا مُحَمَّد بن بِشْر هُوَ الْعَبْدي قَالَ حَدثنَا عُمَرُ بن رَاشِدٍ عَن يَحْيَى بن أَبِي كَثِيرٍ عَن أَبِي سَلَمَةَ عَن

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[14] Whether or not there are people at his/her level or ahead of them, this journey is an individual one, and the feeling of estrangement/'stranger-ness' in this world is essential for progress on this journey. Note that estrangement/'stranger-ness' does not necessarily mean strangeness.

[15] The concept of *fanâ'* is clarified in the main text.

أبي هُرَيْرَةَ ﷺ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ:

"سِيرُوا سَبَقَ الْمُفَرِّدُونَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ وَمَا الْمُفَرِّدُونَ؟ قَالَ الْمُهْتَرُونَ، الَّذِينَ يَهْتَرُونَ فِي ذِكْرِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ؛ يَضَعُ الذِّكْرُ عَنْهُم أَثْقَالَهُم، فَيَأْتُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ خِفَافًا."

وَهَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ لَمْ يَرْوِهِ عَن يَحْيَى بن أَبِي كَثِيرٍ إِلَّا عُمَرُ بن رَاشِدٍ الْيَمَانِيّ. وَخَالَفَ مُحَمَّد بن يُوسُف الْفِرْيَابِيّ فِيهِ مُحَمَّدَ بنَ بَشِيرٍ الْعَبْدِيّ فَرَوَاهُ عَن عُمَرَ بنِ رَاشِدٍ عَن يَحْيَى عَن أَبِي سَلَمَةَ عَن أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ مَرْفُوعًا. وَالْحَدِيث إِنَّمَا هُوَ لأبي هُرَيْرَة، رَوَاهُ بُنْدَارُ بنُ بَشَّارٍ عَن صَفْوَانَ بنِ عِيسَى عَن بَشِيرِ بن رَافِعٍ الْيَمَانِيّ إِمَامِ أَهْلِ نَجْرَانَ ومُفتِيهِم عَن أَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ

"March; the *mufarridoon*[16] have won the race." They said, "O Messenger of Allah, who are the *mufarridoon*?"

He said, "The ones who are consumed by the remembrance of Allah (Mighty and Glorious); *dhikr* removes their burdens, so they come light on the Day of Resurrection."

This is a sound *ḥadeeth* which was not reported from Yaḥyâ ibn Abi Katheer except by 'Umar ibn Râshid al-Yamâni. Muhammad ibn Yoosuf al-Firyâbi diverged from Muhammad ibn Basheer al-'Abdi concerning it, and reported it from Yaḥyâ from Abu Salamah from Abu ad-Dardâ', traceable [to the Prophet ﷺ]. The [authentic] *ḥadeeth* is Abu Hurayrah's; Bundâr ibn Bash-shâr reported it from Ṣafwân ibn 'Eesâ from Basheer ibn Râfi' al-Yamâni, the imam of the people of Najrân and their *mufti*, from Abu 'Abdullâh, the cousin of Abu Hurayrah, from Abu Hurayrah, traceable [to the Prophet ﷺ]. The best chain of

[16] This comes from the word *'fard,'* which means 'one who is alone.' In this context, it could mean either the loners or the ones who single out Allah and observe none but Him alone.

narration belongs to the *ḥadeeth* of al-'Alâ' ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân from his father, from Abu Hurayrah, from the Prophet ﷺ. This is reported in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*. The people of ash-Shâm reported this *ḥadeeth* from Abu Umâmah, traceable [to the Prophet ﷺ]. In all of them, he ﷺ said "The *mufarridoon* have won the race."[17]

بنِ عَمِّ أبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَن أبِي هُرَيْرَة مَرْفُوعًا. وَأحْسَنُها طَرِيقًا وأجْوَدُهَا سَنَدًا حَدِيثُ الْعَلَاءِ بنِ عَبدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَن أبِيهِ عَن أبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَن النَّبِي ﷺ وَهُوَ مُخَرَّجٌ فِي صَحِيحِ مُسْلِم. ورَوَى هَذَا الحَدِيثَ أهلُ الشَّامِ عَن أبِي أُمَامَةَ مَرْفُوعًا. قَالَ فِي كُلِّهَا **سَبَقَ الْمُفَرِّدُونَ**.

Concerning the entry into exile, Ḥamzah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh al-Ḥusayni told us that Abul-Qâsim 'Abdul-Wâḥid ibn Aḥmad al-Hâshimi aṣ-Ṣoofi said: I heard Abu 'Abdullâh 'Allân ibn Zayd ad-Daynoori aṣ-Ṣoofi say: I heard Ja'far al-Khuldi aṣ-Ṣoofi in Basra say: I heard al-Junayd say: I heard as-Sariy report from Ma'roof al-Karkhi, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from his (Ja'far's) grandfather, from 'Ali

وَأخْبرَنَا فِي مَعْنَى الدُّخُولِ فِي الْغُرْبَةِ حَمْزَةُ بنُ مُحَمَّد بنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ الْحُسَيْنِي قَالَ حَدثَنَا أبُو الْقَاسِمِ عَبْدُ الوَاحِدِ بنِ أحْمَدَ الْهَاشِمِي الصُّوفِيَ قَالَ سَمِعتُ أبَا عَبْدِ اللهِ عَلَّانَ بنَ زَيْدِ الدينَوَرِيَ الصُّوفِيَ بِالْبَصْرَةِ قَالَ سَمِعتُ جَعْفَرَ الْخُلْدِيَ الصُّوفِيَ يَقُولُ سَمِعتُ

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[17] Reporting the various *isnâds* (chains of narration) of the *ḥadeeth*, even though he could have cited only its references, is a gesture from the sheikh that the transmitted knowledge must be verified and honored, and that the path of *taṣawwuf* must be based on the authentic knowledge of the Revelation: the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

(may Allah be pleased with him), from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, that he said:

"Seeking the Truth/True One is strangeness."

This *ḥadeeth* is *ghareeb*;[18] I relate it only from the narration of 'Allân.[19]

الْجُنَيْدَ قَالَ سَمِعتُ السَّرِيَّ عَن مَعْرُوفٍ الْكَرْخِيِّ عَن جَعْفَرَ بنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَن أَبِيهِ عَن جَدِّهِ عَن عَلِيٍّ ﷺ عَن رَسُول الله ﷺ قَالَ:

"طَلَبُ الْحَقِّ غُرْبَةٌ."

وَهَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ مَا كَتَبْتُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ رِوَايَةِ عَلَّان.

Concerning the realization of the *mushâhadah* (beholding the Divine),[20] Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bâshâni (may Allah bestow mercy on him) told us that Muhammad ibn Is-ḥâq al-Qurashi narrated to them that 'Uthman ibn Sa'eed ad-Dârimi narrated to them

وَأَخْبَرَنَا فِي مَعْنَى الْحُصُولِ عَلَى الْمُشَاهَدَةِ مُحَمَّدُ بن عَلِيّ بنِ الْحُسَيْنِ الْبَاشَانِيّ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بن إِسْحَاق الْقُرَشِي قَالَ حَدثنَا عُثْمَان بن سَعِيدٍ الدَّارِمِيّ قَالَ

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[18] A *ḥadeeth* may be classified as *ghareeb* for different reasons. Here, it is classified as such because it has been conveyed by only one narrator.

[19] 'Allân was considered a fabricator by *ḥadeeth* scholars. They deemed this *ḥadeeth* fabricated *(mawḍoo')*. Note that this does not mean the meaning is invalid. In fact, the concept of *ghurbah* (strangerness) is an established one. Al-Bukhâri reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Ibn 'Umar, "Be in the world like a stranger or a wayfarer."

[20] *Shuhood* (beholding) of God refers to the heart's beholding of the True One, Allah. It is when the heart's sight is fixated on the first and final Cause so that no other creation, created being, or cause will distract it from Him and from conforming to His will and seeking His pleasure.

that Sulaymân ibn Ḥarb narrated to them from Ḥammâd ibn Zayd, from Maṭar al-Warrâq, from Abu Buraydah, from Yaḥyâ ibn Ya'mur, from 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, regarding Jibreel's question to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ "What is *iḥsân*?" He ﷺ said, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot, then be certain He sees you."

This is an authentic, *ghareeb ḥadeeth* which Muslim reported in the authentic collections. This *ḥadeeth* is a comprehensive indication of the way of this community.[21]

I shall clarify in detail for you the levels of each station, so that you may know the level of the common person, that of the *sâlik* (traveler), and that of the accomplished/elite. Each of them has a path, a scheme, and a destination he or she seeks; a banner has been erected for them to which they are directed, and an end has been set toward which they are driven by God. I ask Allah to make me

حَدثنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بنُ حَرْبٍ
عَن حَمَّاد بنِ زَيْدٍ عَن
مَطَرَ الْوَرَّاقِ عَن أَبِي
بُرَيْدَةَ عَن يَحْيَى بنِ يَعْمُر
عَن عَبدِ اللهِ بنِ عُمَرَ بن
الْخَطَّابِ فِي حَدِيثِ سُؤالِ
جِبْرَائِيل رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ
قَالَ: "مَا الْإِحْسَانُ؟" قَالَ:
"أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ
فَإِن لم تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ
يَرَاكَ."

وَهَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ
غَرِيبٌ أَخْرَجَهُ مُسلمٌ فِي
الصِّحَاحِ. وَهَذَا الحَدِيثُ
إِشَارَةٌ جَامِعَةٌ لمَذْهَبِ هَذِه
الطَّائِفَةِ.

وَإِنِّي مُفَصِّلٌ لَكَ
دَرَجَاتِ كُلِّ مَقَامٍ مِنْهَا
لِتَعْرِفَ دَرَجَةَ الْعَامَّةِ مِنْهُ
ثُمَّ دَرَجَةَ السَّالِكِ ثُمَّ دَرَجَةَ
الْمُحَقِّقِ وَلكُلٍ مِنْهُم شِرْعَةٌ
ومِنْهَاجٌ ووِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا
قَدْ نُصِبَ لَهُ عَلَمٌ هُوَ لَهُ
مَبْعُوثٌ وأُنْتِجَ لَهُ غَايَةٌ هُوَ
إِلَيْهَا مَحْثُوثٌ، وَإِنِّي أَسْأَلُ
اللهَ أَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي فِي قَصْدِي

[21] *Iḥsân* is the goal of all seekers.

accompanied [by His care], not barred [from it], and to grant me clear power: {...Indeed, He is Hearing and Near.} *[Saba' 34:50]*

مَصْحُوبًا لَا مَحْجُوبًا وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِي سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا؛ {إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ}.

The ten sections I have mentioned in the beginning of this book are: 1. section of **the beginnings** 2. section of **the gates** 3. section of the **dealings** 4. section of the **etiquettes** 5. section of **the foundations** 6. section of **the valleys** 7. section of the **states** 8. section of the ***walâyât*** (friendship with the Divine) 9. section of the **realities** 10. section of the **endings**	وَاعْلَم أَن الْأَقْسَامَ الْعَشَرَةَ الَّتِي ذَكَرْتُهَا فِي صَدْرِ هَذَا الْكِتَابِ هِيَ: 1. قِسْمُ **البِدَايَاتِ** ثُمَّ 2. قِسْمُ **الْأَبْوَابِ** ثُمَّ 3. قِسْمُ **الْمُعَامَلَاتِ** ثُمَّ 4. قِسْمُ **الْأَخْلَاقِ** ثُمَّ 5. قِسْمُ **الْأُصُولِ** ثُمَّ 6. قِسْمُ **الأَوْدِيَةِ** ثُمَّ 7. قِسْمُ **الْأَحْوَالِ** ثُمَّ 8. قِسْمُ **الوَلَايَاتِ** ثُمَّ 9. قِسْمُ **الْحَقَائِقِ** ثُمَّ 10. قِسْمُ **النِّهَايَاتِ**.

SECTION I: THE BEGINNINGS

AL-BIDÂYÂT (البِدَايَاتِ)

The section on the beginnings is composed of ten stations:	فَأَمَّا قِسْمُ البِدَايَاتِ فَهُوَ عَشْرَةُ أَبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. wakefulness	1. اليَقَظَةُ
2. repentance	2. وَالتَّوْبَةُ
3. self-reckoning	3. وَالمُحَاسَبَةُ
4. returning	4. وَالإِنَابَةُ
5. reflection	5. وَالتَّفَكُّرُ
6. remembrance	6. وَالتَّذَكُّرُ
7. taking shelter	7. وَالاعْتِصَامُ
8. fleeing	8. وَالفِرَارُ
9. training	9. وَالرِّيَاضَةُ
10. hearing	10. والسَّمَاعُ

Station 1: Wakefulness and Alertness
al-Yaqdhah (اليَقَظَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Say: Surely I admonish you with one (thing) only—that you rise up to Allah by twos and singly.} *[Saba' 34:46]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَثْنَى وَفُرَادَى}.

Rising to Allah means waking from the slumber of heedlessness and fleeing from the predicament of lassitude. It happens with the revival of the servant's heart upon its illumination by alerting lights.[22] Wakefulness consists of three parts:

الْقَوْمَةُ لِلَّهِ هِيَ الْيَقَظَةُ مِنْ سِنَةِ الْغَفْلَةِ، وَالنُّهُوضُ عَنْ وَرْطَةِ الْفَتْرَةِ، وَهِيَ أَوَّلُ مَا يَسْتَنِيرُ قَلْبُ الْعَبْدِ بِالْحَيَاةِ لِرُؤْيَةِ نُورِ التَّنْبِيهِ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

The first is the heart's beholding of the bounties [of Allah] while despairing of ever being able to count them or realize their magnitude, thereafter busying the heart with the realization of His graciousness in bestowing them and coming to full recognition of one's failure in showing the necessary gratitude.

الأول: لَحْظُ الْقَلْبِ إِلَى النِّعْمَةِ، عَلَى الْيَأْسِ مِنْ عَدِّهَا، وَالْوُقُوفِ عَلَى حَدِّهَا، وَالتَّفَرُّغُ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةِ الْمِنَّةِ بِهَا، وَالْعِلْمُ بِالتَّقْصِيرِ فِي حَقِّهَا.

[22] One who awakens rises to start the journey.

الثَّانِي: مُطَالَعَةُ الْجِنَايَةِ، وَالْوُقُوفُ عَلَى الْخَطَرِ فِيهَا، وَالتَّشْمِيرُ لَتَدَارُكِهَا، وَالتَّخَلُّصِ مِنْ رِقِّهَا، وَطَلَبُ النَّجَاةِ بِتَمْحِيصِهَا.

The second is observing one's transgression[23] and understanding its danger, thereafter rushing to control it, rid oneself of its grasp, and seek salvation by cleansing oneself of it.[24]

وَالثالث الِانْتِبَاهُ لِمَعْرِفَةِ الزِّيَادَةِ وَالنُّقْصَانِ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ، وَالتَّنَصُّلُ مِنْ تَضْيِيعِهَا، وَالنَّظَرُ إِلَى الضَّنِّ بِهَا لِيَتَدارَكَ فَائِتَها وَيَعمُرَ باقِيَهَا.

The third is paying attention to the passing of the days and the consequent gains and losses[25] one accrues through them, therefore abstaining from wasting them and instead being protective of them, so that he/she may make up for what he/she missed of them and make the most of what remains.[26]

فَأَمَّا مَعْرِفَةُ النِّعْمَةِ فَإِنَّهَا تَصْفُو بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. بِنُورِ الْعَقْلِ

As for realizing the bounty [of Allah], it is attained through three things:

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[23] Being distant from Allah and disobedient towards Him is a person's greatest transgression.

[24] Cleansing it through *tawbah* (repentance) and *istighfâr* (seeking forgiveness).

[25] The gains are enduring deeds of righteousness, whose reward is guaranteed by Allah. The losses are sins, shortcomings, and lost opportunities to serve Allah with *iḥsân* (excellence).

[26] These three qualities accompany true wakefulness; thus the sheikh uses them to describe the station. One may also look for these qualities in themselves to realize whether or not they have truly awoken from their heedlessness.

1. the light of the intellect[27]
2. witnessing the rays of grace (through the clouds of routine/habituation)
3. taking heed from the condition of those afflicted[28]

2. وَشَيْم بُرُوقِ الْمِنَّةِ
3. وَالاعْتِبَارِ بِأَهْلِ الْبَلَاءِ

As for observing transgression, it can be achieved through three things:

1. glorification of the *ḥaqq*[29]
2. awareness of the *nafs*[30]
3. belief in the warnings[31]

وَأَمَّا مُطَالَعَةُ الْجِنَايَةِ فَإِنَّهَا تَصِحُّ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. بِتَعْظِيمِ الْحَقِّ
2. وَمَعْرِفَةِ النَّفْسِ
3. وَتَصْدِيقِ الْوَعِيدِ

And as for the recognition of the losses and gains in his/her condition, accrued through the passing of the days, it can be attained through three things:

1. attaining (beneficial) knowledge

وَأَمَّا مَعْرِفَةُ الزِّيَادَةِ وَالنُّقْصَانِ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ فَإِنَّهَا تَسْتَقِيمُ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. سَمَاعُ الْعِلْمِ
2. وَإِجَابَةُ دَاعِي الْحُرْمَةِ
3. وَصُحْبَةُ الصَّالِحِينَ

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[27] The light is the innate criterion instilled by Allah in the hearts of His servants that guides them to Him.

[28] To better appreciate the bounties your Lord has bestowed on you. After all, guidance and safety from all harms is His favor upon you.

[29] The righteous predecessors (*as-salaf aṣ-ṣâliḥ*) would say, "Do not look at the triviality of the sin, but rather look at the greatness of the One you disobeyed."

[30] And its wickedness and lowliness.

[31] Those the Messenger of Allah ﷺ related to us from His Lord.

وَمِلَاكُ ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ خَلْعُ الْعَادَاتِ.

2. responding to the caller who warns against violating the sacred rights of Allah

3. keeping the company of the righteous

The thread holding all of this together is the purging of bad customs and habits.[32]

[32] All the bad habits one was accustomed to in the time of heedlessness must be shunned. One's ability and determination to move away from those habits will determine the degree of success in their rising from the stupor of heedlessness.

Station 2: Repentance
at-Tawbah (التَّوْبَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{And whoever does not repent—then it is those who are the wrongdoers.} *[al-Ḥujurât 49:11]*

قَالَ الله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ} فَأسقَطَ اسْمَ الظُّلْمِ عَنِ التَّائِبِ

Thus, He excludes the repentant from the description of transgression.

Tawbah is not validated except after the recognition of one's sin. This is accomplished by observing three matters about the sin:
your abandonment of [Allah's] shelter when you attempted it[33]
your joy when you attained it[34]
your determined failure to refrain from it or make up for it despite your certainty that the True One was watching you

وَالتَّوْبَةُ لَا تَصِحُّ إِلَّا بَعدَ مَعرِفَةِ الذَّنْبِ وَهِيَ أَن تَنظُرَ فِي الذَّنْبِ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاء إِلَى
انْخِلَاعِكَ مِنَ الْعِصْمَةِ حِينَ إِتْيَانِهِ
وَفَرَحِكَ عِنْدَ الظَّفَرِ بِهِ
وَقُعُودِكَ عَلَى الْإِصْرَارِ عَن تَدَارُكِهِ مَعَ يَقِينِكَ بِنَظَرِ الْحَقِّ إِلَيْكَ

The conditions of *tawbah* are three:
1. regretting
2. apologizing[35]

وشَرَائِطُ التَّوْبَةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء:
1. النَّدَمُ
2. والاعْتِذَارُ
3. والإِقْلَاعُ

[33] Or Allah's withdrawal of His protection.
[34] A worse sin, because a true believer will never rejoice in sin, but there will always be a sting in his or her heart because of it.

3. desisting

The realities of *tawbah* are three: وحَقَائِقُ التَّوْبَةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء

1. recognizing the enormity of the offense .1 تَعْظِيمُ الْجِنَايَةِ

2. questioning the *tawbah*[36] .2 واتِّهامُ التَّوْبَةِ

3. finding excuses for the creation[37] .3 وَطَلَبُ إعذَارِ الخَلِيقَة

The secrets of the realities of *tawbah* are three: وسَرائرُ حَقِيقَةِ التَّوْبَةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء

1. sorting out fear of Allah from one's pride[38] .1 تَمْيِيزُ التَّقِيَّة مِنَ الْعِزَّةِ

.2 ونِسيَانُ الْجِنَايَةِ

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[35] Not to present excuses to Allah, but to show your humility and need for His help while seeking His forgiveness.

[36] Questioning your own *tawbah*, your sincerity, and its validity.

[37] Falling into sin would make you less arrogant and more compassionate towards the creations of Allah. This does not mean that you doubt the justice of Allah or use predestination as a plea against Him, but that you will avoid the feeling of personal superiority over the sinners and fear for yourself that you are also subject to such calamities when Allah decrees that you fall into sin. It also means that you will excuse them if they wrong you. Ibn al-Qayyim has pointed out that the Prophet ﷺ did not exempt the sinners from punishment when they transgressed the bounds of Allah, but when they violated his own rights, he did.

Finally, before you criticize others, ask if you have the moral capital to do so. If not, then you should still point out the evil and condemn it, but as a partner in it who wishes safety for oneself and one's fellow human beings, not as a stern preacher.

[38] Are you repenting out of your fear of Allah or to spare yourself from a worldly loss, loss of *ḥâl*/state, or even loss of self-respect? Some also repent because of loss of interest, desire, or resolve to pursue the sin.

2. forgetting the offense[39]
3. repenting from the repentance,[40] because the repentant is included among the generality of addressees in the saying of Allah:

{...And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you.} *[an-Noor 24:31]*

So, He orders the repentant to repent.

The subtleties of *tawbah* are three: The first is to look at the offense and the decree and recognize the intent of Allah when He allowed you to commit it, for Allah allows His slave to commit a sin for

3. وَالتَّوْبَةُ من التَّوْبَةِ أبدًا لِأَنَّ التَّائِبَ دَاخِلٌ فِي الْجَمِيعِ مِن قَوْلِه تَعَالَى: {وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ} فَأمر التَّائبَ بِالتَّوْبَةِ

وَلَطَائِفُ سَرَائِرِ التَّوْبَةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء أَوَّلُها أَن تَنظر بين الْجِنَايَة وَالقَضِيَّةِ فَتَتَعَرَّفَ مُرَادَ اللهِ فِيهَا إِذْ خَلَّاكَ

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[39] This means that you do not allow the offense to ruin your moments of togetherness with Allah or your good thoughts of His mercy and compassion. If it does, then remove it from the front of your mind, but recall it when you find in your *nafs* laxity, arrogance, or self-conceit.

[Regarding use of the word 'togetherness:' The Qur'an and *Sunnah* use terms that suggest anthropomorphism to some people from the masses. They have been used for their power and tangibility. We must then teach the people *tanzeeh* (Allah's transcendence) without negation of the Revelation or unwarranted reinterpretation. In this literature of *tazkiyah*/'Sunni Sufism,' the focus is on bringing the people closer to God and heightening their awareness of Him as if they see Him.]

[40] This has both negative and positive meanings, but knowing the sheikh, we must presume that he meant it in the positive sense. This would involve repenting from incomplete, deficient, insincere repentance.

one of two reasons:

The first: for you to recognize His might in His decrees, His goodness in His concealment,[41] His forbearance in deferring the offender,[42] His generosity in accepting his or her apology, and His grace in forgiving him or her.[43]

The second: to establish His plea against His slave, so that He may deservingly punish him or her for their sin.

و إتْيَانَهَا فَإنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إنَّمَا يُخَلِّي العَبْدَ و الذَّنْبَ لأحَدِ مَعْنَيَيْنِ

أحَدُهُمَا أنْ تَعْرِفَ عِزَّتَهُ فِي قَضَائِهِ وبِرَّهُ فِي سَتْرِه وحِلمَهُ فِي إمهَالِ رَاكِبِهِ وَكَرَمَهُ فِي قَبُولِ الْعُذرِ مِنْهُ وفَضلَهُ فِي مَغفِرَتِهِ.

وَالثَّانِي لِيقِيم على العَبْد حجَّة عدله فيعاقبه على ذَنبه بحجته.

The second subtlety is that the truthful and insightful person's full awareness of their sins will make them realize that they have not been left with any good deed,[44] for they journey constantly: beholding on one side the grace [of their Lord] and on the other the defects of

و اللطيفة الثَّانِيَة أن تعلم أن طلب الْبَصِير الصَّادِق سيئته لم يُبْقِ لَهُ حَسَنَة بِحَالٍ لِأنَّهُ يسير بَين مُشَاهدَةِ الْمِنَّة وتَطَلُّبِ عَيْبِ النَّفس وَالْعَمَل.

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[41] Covering up the sinner and his or her sin.

[42] Allowing them time to repent and not hastening the punishment for them.

[43] Ibn al-Qayyim points out here that one's love for the one who rewards them for their good deeds and then forgives them for their evil ones and accepts their pardon is much greater than their love for the one who only rewards them for their good deeds.

[44] To be proud of or to rely on for salvation, so they always feel the need for Allah and for reliance on Him for their salvation.

their *nafs* and deeds.[45]

The third subtlety is that the slave's beholding of the decree will not allow him/her to see good as good or evil as ugly, for he/she will ascend from that to beholding the fact of the decree itself.[46]

والطيفة الثَّالِثَة أن مُشَاهدَة العَبْد الحكم لم تدع لَهُ استِحْسَان حَسَنَة وَلَا استِقباحَ سَيِّئَةٍ لصُعودِه من جَمِيعِ الْمعَانِي إِلَى مَعْنَى الحُكمِ.

The *tawbah* of the public is from seeing the abundance of their good deeds, for this leads to three things:

فتوبة الْعَامَّة لاستكثار الطَّاعَة فَإِنَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى ثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاء إِلَى جحود نعْمَة

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[45] The recognition of one's sins and shortcomings is essential for humility (ذل), for humility to Allah, as Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates, is of four types:

- the humility shared by all creations regardless of their choice, for they are all subject to His decrees, which they cannot resist
- the humility of the obedient one, who chooses to worship Him—and humility is the essence of worship and obedience
- the humility of the lovers, for love entails showing humility to the beloved
- the humility of the sinners, whose sins break their confidence and self-regard

[46] The best interpretation for this ambiguous statement, which could possibly be problematic, is that he/she will see all decrees emanating from the Lord; as far as they are attributed to Him they are all good. Once they are attributed to us, then they may be good or bad. Here Ibn al-Qayyim gives the parable of sunrays which are all the same, but once they go through different bodies they take different shades.

denying the favor of [His] concealment and deferment
feeling one's entitlement to Allah's favors
feeling independence, which is the essence of tyranny and transgression against Allah

السَّتْرِ والإمهالِ ورؤيةِ
الْحقِّ على اللهِ والاسْتِغناءِ
الَّذِي هُوَ عينُ الجَبَرُوتِ
والتَّوَثُّبِ على اللهِ.

The *tawbah* of the intermediate seekers is from belittling the sin, for this is the essence of audacious rebellion and haughtiness and subsequent slipping into complete desertion.

The *tawbah* of the select few is from wasting time,[47] for it leads to falling into

وتَوبَةُ الأوساطِ مِن
اسْتِقْلَالِ الْمعْصِيَةِ وَهُوَ
عَيْنُ الجُرأةِ والمُبارَزَةِ
ومَحْضُ التَّزَيُّنِ بالحَمِيَّةِ
والاسْتِرْسالِ للقَطِيعَةِ
وتوبة الْخَاصَّة من
تَضْيِيعِ الْوَقْتِ فَإِنَّهُ يَدْعُو

[47] That is, any time you are not together with Allah.

Regarding *jam'* (جَمْع): union, unity, gathering, togetherness with Allah:

The valid concept of union (which is different from the heretic belief of *ḥulool* and *ittiḥâd*, translated as Divine indwelling and union) is when your will completely conforms to His, so you are one with Him in purpose. It also refers to the state of being with Allah, cut off from worldly pursuits and cravings. More importantly, it refers to observing the unity and oneness of the Real, the Eternal, the First, the Origin, the Source, the Ultimate Effector, the Self-Sufficient One, and observing that all else (*ghayr*) is true because He is the True Creator, but at the same time, they are contingent upon His will and manifestations of it. Additionally, all events in the universe are also true but again, they are nothing but manifestations of His names.

deficiency, extinguishes the light of watchfulness, and spoils the spring[48] of companionship.

إِلَى دَرَكِ النَّقِيصَةِ وَيُطفِئُ نورَ المُرَاقَبَةِ وَيُكَدِّرُ عَينَ الصُّحْبَة

The station of *tawbah* is not finalized except by repenting from anything save the True One, then observing any defect in that repentance, and then repenting from this observance.[49]

وَلَا يَتِمُّ مقَامُ التَّوْبَة إِلَّا بِالانتِهَاءِ إِلَى التَّوْبَةِ مِمَّا دُونَ الْحقِّ ثُمَّ رُؤْيَةِ عِلَّةِ تِلْكَ التَّوْبَةِ ثُمَّ التَّوْبَةِ مِن رُؤْيَةِ تِلْكَ الْعِلَّةِ.

[48] In the sense of a spring from which water flows.

[49] Because to the sheikh, seeing your repentance means that you still see yourself and your own actions, which is a blight and a shortcoming for the seekers of complete perceptual annihilation, who will behold only Allah and His actions.

Station 3: Self-Reckoning
al-Muḥâsabah (المُحَاسَبَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow.} *[al-Ḥashr 59:18]*

قَالَ الله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ}

One will truly begin the task of self-reckoning only after having the resolve to repent. This resolve has three pillars:

وَإِنَّمَا يَسْلُكُ طَرِيقَ المُحَاسَبَةِ بَعدَ الْعَزِيمَةِ على عَقدِ التَّوْبَةِ. والْعَزِيمَةُ لَهَا ثَلَاثَة أَرْكَان:

First: comparing between His favors and your transgressions; this is difficult for one who lacks the following three qualities:

أحدهَا أَن تقيس بَين نعْمَته وجنايتك وَهَذَا يشق على من لَيْسَ لَهُ ثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاء:

1. the light of wisdom[50]
2. suspicion of oneself[51]
3. the ability to distinguish between

1. نُورُ الْحِكْمَةِ
2. وَسُوءُ الظَّنِّ بِالنَّفْسِ
3. وتَمييزُ النِّعْمَةِ مِنَ

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[50] This is beneficial knowledge: the knowledge that resides in the heart after it has been processed by one's intellect. It is the knowledge that helps us sort out truth from falsehood and that will keep us from disrespecting authority; it will also keep us from surrendering blindly to anyone short of the Infallible.

[51] If you think good of yourself, you will not look carefully for your faults and aggressions. However, one must not be overly harsh or unfair to oneself, either. It is important that one recognize Allah's favors on them to promote them and use whatever talents and skills He bestowed on them for His cause.

favors and trials[52]

Second: sorting out that which belongs to the True One from that which belongs to you or comes from you, so that you may realize that:

1. the offense was a plea against you
2. the obedience was a favor to you
3. the decrees were not excuses for you, but rather evidences against you[53]

Third: recognizing that:

1. every act of obedience you were content with is against you[54]
2. every act of disobedience by which you disgraced your brother will be yours[55]
3. you must not let the scale of your time

الْفِتْنَة

وَالثَّانِي تَمْيِيزُ مَا للحَقِّ عَمَّا لَك أَو مِنْك فَتَعْلَمَ:

1. أَن الْجِنَايَة عَلَيْك حُجَّةٌ
2. وَالطَّاعَةَ عَلَيْك مِنَّةٌ
3. وَالْحُكْمَ عَلَيْك حُجَّة مَا هُوَ لَكَ مَعْذِرَة

وَالثَّالِث أَن تَعرف أَنَّ:

1. كُلَّ طَاعَةٍ رَضِيتَهَا مِنْك فَهِيَ عَلَيْك
2. وكُلَّ مَعْصِيَةٍ عَيَّرْتَ بِهَا أَخَاكَ فَهِيَ إِلَيْك
3. وَلَا تُضِع مِيزَانَ وَقْتِك مِن يَدَيْك

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[52] Think of wealth. Is it a favor or a trial? It was a favor for Sulaymân (peace be upon him) and a trial for Qâroon. Think of the power that was given to both Pharaoh and Dhul-Qarnayn.

[53] He is warning you against using *qadr* as an excuse. It was destined against you only because you deserved it. This applies to nations as well as individuals. Without absolving any transgressor of guilt, do not blame anyone but yourself for your failures.

[54] It is unbecoming of a wise believer to become overconfident with his or her good deeds, because they cannot be certain of their acceptance. If they are, it is a sign of conceit and self-deceit.

[55] Gloating over the calamities that befall others is one of the satanic qualities. Falling into sin and walking away from Allah are the worst calamities that may befall human beings.

slip from your hands[56]

[56] This points out the importance of measuring any benefit you accrued and any loss you suffered in your time. It makes you utilize your present and plan for your future in the best way. To be able to gauge your progress, you must have goals, structure, and frequent re-evaluations.

Station 4: Returning
al-Inâbah (الإِنَابَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said: {And return [in repentance] [57] to your Lord.} *[az-Zumar 39:54]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: {وأنيبوا إِلَى ربكُم}

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[57] This is basically a phase within the phases of true, sincere *tawbah*. However, since to some people *tawbah* may mean only an apology and determination to abstain from repeating the offense, it is necessary to describe the work binding on the believer to show that he or she is truly returning to Allah. The word *'inâbah'* is mentioned in many verses in the Qur'an, sometimes in the form of a command, like here:

{وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ}

{And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped.} *(az-Zumar 39:54)*

It also appears in the form of an adjective or adverb; for example:

{إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُّنِيبٌ}

{Indeed, Ibrâheem was forbearing, grieving, and [frequently] returning [to Allah].} *(Hood 11:75)*

"مَّنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ"

{Who feared the Most Merciful unseen and came with a heart returning [in repentance].} *(Qâf 50:33)*

"وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُم مُّنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُم مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ"

{And when adversity touches the people, they call upon their Lord, turning in repentance to Him. Then when He lets them taste mercy from Him, at once a party of them associates others with their Lord.} *(ar-Room 30:33)*

Returning involves three parts:	الْإِنَابَةُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء
1. returning to the True One with sincere reform after one has returned to Him with apologies[58]	1. الرُّجُوع إِلَى الْحق إِصلاحًا كَمَا رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ اعتذارًا
2. returning to Him with fulfilment after returning to Him with commitment[59]	2. وَالرُّجُوع إِلَيْهِ وَفَاءً كَمَا رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ عهدًا
3. returning to Him with one's [interior] state after responding to His call [with his/her exterior][60]	3. وَالرُّجُوع إِلَيْهِ حَالا كَمَا رَجَعَ إِلَيْهِ إِجَابَةً
Return with true reform may be	وَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَقِيمِ الرُّجُوعُ إِلَيْهِ

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[58] Saying 'sorry' does not mean a person is truly regretful; one may be sorry but fail to show reform after extending his or her apologies.

[59] When one repents, they make pledges to Allah; Allah will hold them to their pledges. He has cautioned:

{وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَارَ ۚ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا}

{And they had already promised Allah before not to turn their backs and flee. And ever is the promise to Allah [that about which one will be] questioned.} *(al-Aḥzâb 33:15)*

[60] Ibn al-Qayyim quotes al-Hassan:

"ابْنَ آدَمَ: لَكَ قَوْلٌ وَعَمَلٌ ، وَعَمَلُكَ أَوْلَى بِكَ مِنْ قَوْلِكَ ، وَلَكَ سَرِيرَةٌ وَعَلَانِيَةٌ ، وَسَرِيرَتُكَ أَمْلَكُ بِكَ مِنْ عَلَانِيَتِكَ."

"O son of Adam, you speak and act and your actions are more deserving of your attention than your speech; and you have interior and exterior and your interior determines your destiny more than your exterior."

One may be more capable of disciplining his or her exterior, which is important but not sufficient; complete salvation will be earned when one truly purifies their interior.

إصلاحًا بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ

1. بِالْخرُوجِ من التَّبعَاتِ
2. والتوجعِ للعَثَرَاتِ
3. واستدراكِ الفائتاتِ

correctly attained through three things:

1. mending the consequences [of the sins][61]
2. feeling pain over the missteps[62]
3. making up for what was missed[63]

وَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَقِيم الرُّجُوع إِلَيْهِ وَفَاء بِثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاءَ

1. بالخلاص من لَذَّة الذَّنبِ
2. وبِتَركِ الاستِهانةِ بِأَهْل الْغَفْلَةِ تَخَوُّفا عَلَيْهِم مَعَ الرَّجَاءِ لنَفسِكَ
3. وبالاستِقصاءِ فِي رُؤْيَة عِلَلِ الْخِدمَةِ

Returning to Him with fulfilment may be correctly attained through three things:

1. escaping from the pleasure of sins[64]
2. refraining from looking condescendingly on the people of heedlessness and fearing for

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[61] In addition to your regrets and apologies, you must return the rights to the deserving people and fix the wrongs you committed or caused.

[62] This could mean your own missteps, but it also means that one who truly returns to Allah with his or her heart will have a tender heart that wishes good for all people and hurts over their missteps.

[63] Now that you have repented, make up your missed prayers, *dhikr*, and times of heedlessness. If you were harsh with your spouse or relatives, compensate by extra acts of kindness, etc.

[64] And that is when your *hawâ* and desires conform to those of Allah and what His Messenger ﷺ brought to you. The Prophet ﷺ said:

" لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ"

"None of you [truly] believes until his desires are subservient to that which I have brought." (Imam an-Nawawi says, "We have related it in *Kitâb al-Ḥujjah* with a *ṣaḥeeḥ* chain of narrator

them while having hope for yourself[65]

3. being all-encompassing when observing the defects of one's service (worship)

وَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَقِيم الرُّجُوع إِلَيْهِ حَالا بِثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاءَ

Returning to Him with your interior may be correctly attained through three things:

1. despair over your actions[66]
2. observing your poverty and need
3. beholding His gentleness and graciousness towards you[67]

1. بِالإِيَاسِ مِنْ عَمَلِكَ
2. وَمُعَايَنَةِ اضطرارك
3. وَشَيْمِ بَرْقِ لُطْفِهِ بِك

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[65] When it would be more appropriate for you to be most fearful for your own salvation and safety and more suspecting of your own intentions.

[66] You will never see your actions as proofs of entitlement because you will always be concerned about whether they were accepted and how much of them was accepted. You doubt that your actions are good for any reward or can earn you anything of value. Even if they were accepted, they are still His gifts.

[67] And finally, after despairing of your actions and self, you behold His vast, all-encompassing mercy and have hope in being included among those upon whom He will bestow His mercy.

Station 5: Reflection
at-Tafakkur (التَّفَكُّرُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might reflect.[68]} *[an-Naḥl 16:44]*

قَالَ الله عز وَجل:

{وأنزلنا إِلَيْك الذّكر لتبين للنَّاس مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِم ولَعَلَّهُم يَتَفَكَّرُون}.

Know that reflection is the search for insight in pursuit of the final goal; it is of three types:

1. reflecting on the essence of *tawḥeed*
2. reflecting on the wonders of [His] acts and creations
3. reflecting on the realities of actions and [interior] states

اعْلَمْ أَن التَّفَكُّرَ تَلَمُّسُ الْبَصِيرَةِ لِاسْتِدْرَاكِ الْبُغْيَةِ وَهُوَ ثَلَاثَةُ أَنْوَاع:

1. فِكْرَةٌ فِي عَيْنِ التَّوْحِيدِ
2. وفِكْرَةٌ فِي لَطائِفِ الصَّنْعَةِ
3. وفِكْرَةٌ فِي مَعَانِي الْأَعْمَالِ وَالْأَحْوَالِ

[68] *Tafakkur* (تفكر) is the reflexive form of the root *fakar* فكر, which means to reflect or meditate. These forms are used in Arabic to describe actions that require great effort and persistence.

As for the reflection on the essence of *tawḥeed*, it is the audacious sailing into the ocean of denial,[69] which none will survive except through taking shelter in the light of disclosure[70] and

فَأما الفِكْرَةُ فِي عَيْنِ
التَّوْحِيدِ فَهِيَ اقْتِحامُ بَحرِ
الْجُحُودِ لَا يُنجي مِنْهُ إِلَّا
الِاعْتِصَامُ بِضِياءِ الْكَشْفِ
والتَّمَسُّكُ بِالْعلمِ الظَّاهِرِ

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[69] Denial of true *tawḥeed*, since true *tawḥeed* (to the author رَحِمَهُ الله) happens after annihilation of the self, so as long as he or she is aware of his or her reflection and the 'self' that is reflecting, they would still not have realized the true meaning of His oneness and would still be in denial. This is all based on the author's concept of *'fanâ''* or 'annihilation.' However, the mainstream Sunni concept of annihilation (*fanâ'*) may be more accurately described as the annihilation of all desires and pursuits in relation to the pursuit of His pleasure and the annihilation of the creations in the calculations of one who is always aware of and focusing on Allah. While he or she realizes the existence of those creations, they never obstruct him or her from beholding the Divine, the True One, the Ultimate Effector, the Beginner of all things. When you observe the creations, they will be like panes of glass that never block you from seeing through them. When they hurt or benefit you, you see His decrees and His works in their actions. Your response will be cognizant of Him, not them.

[70] The concept of *'kashf'* (disclosure) occurs frequently in Sufi writings. This is usually used in the context of disclosing some of the unseen to the seeker. The unseen is relative and absolute. The relative is known to some of Allah's creation, such as an event that is taking place in China at the moment you are reading this, while you are in your living room in America. It is unseen to you, but not to all of creation. Allah may show some seekers some of this (relatively) unseen as a *karâmah* or to strengthen their faith. Some Sufis exaggerate in what may be revealed to the *wali* until they attribute to them knowledge that is the sole property of Allah. *Kashf* may also

adhering to the outward (textual) science.

As for the reflection about the wonders of [His] acts and creations, it is the water that irrigates the seeds of wisdom.

As for reflection about the realities of actions and [interior] states, it facilitates the journey on the path of *ḥaqeeqah* (truth).

One may be saved from reflecting on the essence of *tawḥeed* by three things:

1. realizing the incapacity of the intellect[71]

وَأَمَّا الفِكْرَةُ فِي لطائف الصَّنَائِع فَهِيَ مَاء يسْقِي زَرْعَ الْحِكْمَةِ

وَأما الفِكْرَةُ فِي مَعَاني الْأَعْمَالِ وَالْأَحْوَال فَهِيَ تُسَهِّلُ سُلوكَ طَرِيقِ الْحَقِيقَةِ

وَإِنَّمَا يتَخَلَّص من الفِكْرَةِ فِي عَيْنِ التَّوْحِيدِ بِثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاء:

1. بِمَعْرِفَةِ عَجْزِ الْعَقْلِ
2. وبالإياسِ مِنَ الْوُقُوفِ على الْغَايَةِ

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refer to granting a person proper understanding of the realities of existence and the *deen*. As long as this *kashf* is subservient to the *shar'* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, it is a sound concept. Any thoughts by which one may be inspired must go through the test of conformity with the Revelation (Qur'an and *Sunnah*). Abu Sulaymân ad-Dârâni (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"رُبمَا يَقع فِي قلبِي النُّكْتَة من نكت الْقَوْم أَيَّامًا ، فَلَا أقبل مِنْهُ إِلَّا بِشَاهِدين عَدْلَيْنِ الْكتاب وَالسّنة."

"Sometimes a thought of those of the people (seekers) crosses my heart, but I would not accept it without two trustworthy witnesses: the Book and the *Sunnah*." (*Ṭabaqât aṣ-Ṣoofiyah* by as-Sulami)

[71] Then he or she will lose hope in realizing the essence of the Divine and comprehending it through that intellect. The finite cannot have an encompassing understanding of the infinite, and the

2. despairing of realizing the ultimate target[72]
3. taking shelter in the stronghold of *ta'dheem* (exaltation)[73]

3. وبالاعْتِصامِ بِحَبْلِ التَّعْظِيمِ

The wonders of [His] acts and creations are appreciated by three things:

1. careful consideration of the origins of the favors
2. responding to the [Divine] signals
3. escaping from the captivity of desires

وَإِنَّمَا تدْرَكُ لَطائِفُ الصَّنَائِعِ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاء:

1. بِحُسْنِ النَّظَرِ فِي مَبَادِئِ المِنَنِ
2. والإجَابَةِ لِدوَاعِي الإشاراتِ
3. وبالخَلاصِ مِن رِقِّ الشَّهَوَاتِ

One may realize through reflection the rankings of actions and [inner] states through three things:

1. adhering to knowledge [*Shari'ah*]
2. suspecting all the outer states[74]
3. identifying the rankings of other

وَإِنَّمَا يُوقَفُ بالفِكْرَةِ عَلى مَرَاتِبِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَالْأَحْوَالِ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاء:

1. باستِصحابِ الْعِلْمِ
2. واتِّهامِ المَرْسومَاتِ
3. وَمَعْرِفَةِ مَواقِعِ الْغَيْرِ

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intellect may not be able to judge or gauge that of which it has no previous experience.

[72] Then they will be content with what they were told about Him and His attributes and they will not seek to pursue that which is concealed from them in this world.

[73] One may escape from any attempt to qualify His attributes by exalting Him above all similitudes and imaginations.

[74] Not only those of this *dunyâ*, like wealth and power, but even the religious obligations and acts, like prayers, charity, and fasting. One should not be deluded by them. They also should not be the subject of one's devotion. Only Allah must be.

Station 6: Remembrance
at-Tadhakkur (التَّذَكُّر)

Allah, the Almighty, said: {...but none will remember except he who turns back [in repentance].} *[Ghâfir 40:13]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ: {وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ}.

Remembrance is superior to reflection, for reflection is a pursuit [of something] and remembrance is finding it.[75]

التَّذَكُّرُ فَوْقَ التَّفَكُّرِ، فإنَّ التَّفَكُّرَ طَلَبٌ، وَالتَّذَكُّرَ وُجُودٌ.

Remembrance stands on three pillars:

وأبنِيَةُ التَّذَكُّرِ ثَلاثَةُ أشْيَاء

1. الإنْتِفَاعُ بالعِظَة

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[75] For *tadhakkur*—which is not merely the repetitive enunciation of sacred speech—is to bring back (invoke) the fruits of *tafakkur* (reflection) to the center of one's attention and take them to heart. Also, through the utterance of His names, a different level of meta-rational (not counter-rational) recognition is reached.

Tafakkur and *tadhakkur* must go together in a symbiotic and self-correcting relationship. Al-Ḥasan has said:

"مَا زَالَ أَهْلُ العِلْمِ يَعُودُونَ بالتَّذَكُّرِ عَلَى التَّفَكُّرِ وبِالتَّفَكُّرِ عَلَى التَّذَكُّرِ ويُنَاطِقُونَ القُلُوبَ حَتَّى نَطَقَتْ."

"People of knowledge continue to augment thought with remembrance, and remembrance with thought, imploring the hearts to speak until the hearts spoke [with wisdom]."

Although *tafakkur* and *tadhakkur* are mentioned as stations, they are also the necessary gear for the journey to recognition and devotion. In other words, they are of the epistemic constants of the path.

1. benefiting from the exhortations — 2. واستِبصارُ الْعِبْرَةِ
2. insightful recognition of the lessons[76] — 3. وَالظَّفَرُ بِثَمَرِ الفِكْرَةِ
3. reaping the fruits of reflection[77]

Benefiting from the exhortation depends upon three things: — وَإِنَّمَا يُنْتَفَعُ بالعِظَة بعد حُصُول ثَلَاثَة أَشْيَاء

1. pressing urgency for it[78] — 1. بِشدَّة الافْتِقَارِ إِلَيْهَا
2. blindness to the flaws of the exhorter (preacher) — 2. والعَمَى عَن عَيْبِ الْوَاعِظِ
3. remembrance of the promises and warnings [of Allah] — 3. وبِذِكْرِ الْوَعْدِ والوَعِيدِ

Insightful recognition of the lessons depends on three things: — وَإِنَّمَا تُسْتَبْصَرُ الْعِبْرَةُ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاء

1. the vitality of the intellect — 1. بِحَيَاةِ الْعَقْل
2. recognition of the days[79] — 2. وَمَعْرِفَةِ الْأَيَّامِ

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[76] Every day, Allah teaches us new lessons through good and bad occurrences. Reflecting on those events will allow us to intellectually penetrate the outer crust and realize their inner realities and truths. *Tadhakkur* will permit us to internalize those findings and make them operative, generating the primordial ground for other stations, such as *shukr* (gratefulness), *ṣabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah), *rajâ'* (hope), *khawf* (fear), *tawbah* (repentance), etc.

[77] To bring it back to the center of awareness and build on it, whereby *tafakkur* is not limited to the cognitive function of self-reflection, but goes beyond that to impact the emotional, psychological, and spiritual experiences of the meditator, reshaping him or her and changing their outlook and behavior.

[78] Do you notice how water tastes very different to a thirsty man?

[79] This is, either about one's own days, meaning the increases and decreases in one's state, or the days of Allah, meaning His

3. cure from (unbefitting) wants [and biases]

3. والسَّلامَةِ مِن الْأَغْرَاضِ

Harvesting the fruits of reflection depends on three things:

وَإِنَّما تُجْنَى ثَمَرَةُ الفِكْرَةِ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاء

1. paucity of hope [in longevity]
2. reflection on the Qur'an
3. limiting mixing with others,[80] wishful thinking,[81] attachments,[82] satiety, and sleep

1. بِقِصَرِ الأَمَلِ
2. والتَّأَمُّلِ فِي الْقُرْآن
3. وَقِلَّةِ الْخُلْطَةِ وَالتَّمَنِّي والتَّعَلُّقِ والشِّبَعِ والمَنَامِ

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dispensations regarding those who obeyed Him and those who disobeyed Him.

[80] Mixing with people and being consumed with their affairs.

[81] Such as deferring the return to Allah in penitence and counting on His forgiveness without seeking it.

[82] Attachments to others besides Allah.

Station 7: Taking Shelter
al-I'tiṣâm (الاِعْتِصَام)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And hold firmly to the rope of Allah...}[83] *[Âli 'Imrân 3:103]*

and

{... hold fast to Allah. He is your protector...}[84] *[al-Ḥaj 22:78]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{واعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيعًا} و

{واعْتَصِمُوا بِاللهِ هُوَ مَوْلاكُم}.

Holding firmly to the rope of Allah concerns adhering to His obedience while being watchful of His commands.[85] Taking shelter with Allah[86] is [through]

الاِعْتِصَامُ بِحَبْلِ اللهِ هُوَ الْمُحَافَظَةُ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، مُرَاقِبًا لِأَمْرِهِ. والاِعْتِصَامُ بِاللهِ التَّرَقِّي

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[83] The rope of Allah has been interpreted by the righteous predecessors to mean many things. Collectively, they pointed to the milestones on the path of guidance. The Qur'an would be supreme among those, then the *Sunnah*. Ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) also added the *jamâ'ah* (the mainstream of practicing believers).

[84] Like any journeyer, you need guidance as well as power and protection. Power and protection may be found only with Allah.

[85] You are obeying Him out of loving and revering observance of His commands, not for your comfort, status, or any other inferior goals. You are also obeying Him according to His command, as relayed to you by His Messenger ﷺ, not your opinions or whims.

[86] Although similar in meaning, there are subtle differences between *isti'âdhah billâh* and *i'tiṣâm billâh*. *Isti'âdhah* usually refers to imploring for protection, while *i'tiṣâm* usually involves working for it, which also includes imploring, since you cannot reach any goals

transcendence beyond all illusions[87] and riddance from any hesitation.[88]

عَنْ كُلِّ مَوْهُومٍ والتَّخَلُّصْ
مِنْ كُلِّ تَرَدُّدٍ. والِاعْتِصَامُ

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without His help. *I'tiṣâm* implies drawing close to the Lord, because one who is distant from Him cannot be justly described as *mu'taṣim bihi* (taking shelter with/in Him).

[87] The sheikh does not mean by describing all creations as illusions that they do not exist, but if you compare their transient, contingent, self-insufficient existence with that of the True One, it pales to the point of being called a *wahm* (illusion). The heretical type of *fanâ'* is *fanâ' al-wujood* (annihilation of existences other than the Divine), where one claims nothing is existent except the Lord, which inevitably leads to pantheism/union. This was not the creed of Sheikh ul-Islam al-Anṣâri, who was *Athari* in his creed, as he detailed in his books and as is known from his *seerah*. He used to affirm the attributes of Allah and His transcendence, and being above the throne, separate from His creations. The orthodox form of *fanâ'* (annihilation) is *fanâ' al-irâdah* (annihilation of will) of the servant into the *irâdah* of the Lord. This happens when the servant wills not, wishes not, desires not but that which is willed by his/her Lord. As for *fanâ' ash-shuhood* (perception), it must be qualified. You will not allow your awareness of the surroundings to compete with your observation, watchfulness, and mindfulness of the True One (الحَقُّ). So, in comparison to your watchfulness of Allah, all others will vanish from your perception. The best of this *Ummah*, the Prophet ﷺ, was well aware of his surroundings and grounded in his reality without allowing any of that to obstruct him from beholding the True One with the eyes of his heart or distracting him from pleasing Him with every breath that moved in and out of his chest.

[88] A heart that has no certainty, togetherness, and focus on the True One is infested with reluctance and hesitation between the Divine and the mirage of other deities, the everlasting life and the quickly-passing one, good and evil, truth and falsehood, etc.

Taking shelter with Allah is of three levels:

على ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The *i'tiṣâm* of the masses by the Revelation, with submission and compliance, which happens by:

اعْتِصَامِ الْعَامَّةِ بِالْخَبَرِ، اسْتِسْلَامًا وَإِذْعَانًا،

1. believing the promises and warnings
2. revering the commands and prohibitions
3. basing all dealings on certainty[89] and justice[90]

1. بِتَصْدِيقِ الْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعِيدِ
2. وَتَعْظِيمِ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ
3. وَتَأْسِيسِ الْمُعَامَلَةِ عَلَى الْيَقِينِ وَالْإِنْصَافِ

This is holding fast to the rope of Allah.[91]

وَهُوَ الِاعْتِصَامُ بِحَبْلِ اللهِ

The *i'tiṣâm* of the select few is by complete dedication, and that is:

وَاعْتِصَامُ الْخَاصَّةِ بِالانْقِطَاعِ، وَهُوَ:

1. sparing the will through restraint[92]
2. extending gracious treatment with

1. صَوْنُ الْإِرَادَةِ قَبْضًا
2. وَإِسْبَالُ الْخُلُقِ عَلَى

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[89] Certainty in God and His promises and that which is with Him.

[90] Justice to Allah by showing Him the devotion and gratitude due to Him and to His creations by applying the 'Golden Rule.'

[91] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) says in *Madârij as-Sâlikeen* that this form of *i'tiṣâm* is also befitting for the topmost of the select few.

[92] Sparing your *irâdah* (will) from desiring what is evil or inferior through restraint. Wanting less and less of the desires of the *nafs*, until the *nafs* wants only what He wants.

manners to all creations

الْخَلْقِ بَسْطًا

3. resolute desertion of all attachments[93]

3. وَرَفْضُ الْعَلَائِقِ عَزْمًا

This is grasping the most trustworthy handhold.

وَهُوَ التَّمَسُّكُ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى

The *i'tiṣâm* of the topmost of the select few is through communion;[94] this involves:

واعتصام خَاصَّةِ الْخَاصَّةِ بالاتِّصالِ، وَهُوَ:

1. beholding[95] the True One alone
2. after aligning oneself near Him in awe
3. being distracted by nearness to Him from everything else[96]

1. شُهُودُ الْحَقِّ تَفْرِيدًا
2. بَعْدَ الاستِحْذاءِ لَهُ تَعْظِيمًا
3. والاشْتِغَال بِهِ قُرْبًا

This is taking shelter with Allah.

وَهُوَ الِاعْتِصَام بِاللَّهِ

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[93] Worldly attachments to people, pursuits, and things.

[94] The previous level was the level of *inqiṭâ'* (detachment) from all of the *'siwâ'* (السِوَى: other than Allah)—except from what He loves—which is the prerequisite for the perfect *ittiṣâl* (communion) with Allah.

[95] That is, when you stop observing your own actions, including your fleeing to Him, and contemplate Him alone. *Shuhood* is about observing, watching, and beholding. (Refer also to the explanation in the Introduction.)

[96] When you are too busy with His nearness to care about anything else.

Station 8: Fleeing
al-Firâr (الْفِرَارُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{Then flee to Allah...} *[adh-Dhâriyât 51:50]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللهِ}.

Fleeing to Allah means escaping from that which did not exist[97] to the One Who has always existed. It is of three levels:

الْفِرَار هُوَ الْهَرَبُ مِمَّا لَمْ يَكُنْ إِلَى مَا لَمْ يَزَلْ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The fleeing of the public, which is

فِرَارُ الْعَامَّةِ

1. from ignorance to knowledge, with certainty and industry
2. from lethargy to enthusiasm, with vigilance and determination
3. from tightness to vastness, with trust and hope[98]

1. مِنَ الْجَهْلِ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ عَقْدًا وَسَعْيًا،
2. وَمِنَ الْكَسَلِ إِلَى التَّشْمِيرِ حَذَرًا وَعَزْمًا
3. وَمِنَ الضِّيقِ إِلَى السَّعَةِ ثِقَةً وَرَجَاءً

And the fleeing of the select few:

وفرار الْخَاصَّةِ

1. from hearing to seeing[99]

1. مِنَ الْخَبَرِ إِلَى الشُّهُودِ

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[97] The creations which had a beginning, before which they did not exist.

[98] Only certainty in God and the hereafter and hope in the pleasure and reward of the Most High will allow you to escape from the tightness of this world to the vastness of ultimate reality.

[99] From *'ilm al-yaqeen* (knowledge based on certainty and evidence) to *'ayn al-yaqeen* (knowledge based on eyesight). The disbelievers asked for that, but they had not accepted faith first so they were not

2. from images to realities[100]
3. from (attachment) to desirables to shedding them off[101]

2. وَمِن الرُّسُومِ إِلَى الأُصُولِ
3. وَمِن الحُظُوظِ إِلَى التَّجْرِيدِ

And the fleeing of the topmost:
1. from all that is other than the True

وفِرارُ خَاصَّةِ الخَاصَّةِ

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answered. Ibrâheem (peace be upon him) asked for it after accepting faith and deserving it, so he was answered.

The final level of certainty is *haqq al-yaqeen* (the truth of certainty), which is by feeling. For example, seeing the fire is one thing and feeling its flames is another.

[100] Some of the images are to be honored and revered, such as the Sunni form of praying. However, *khushoo'* of the heart and the feeling of connectedness to Allah are the essence of praying. Such are the realities to which we must pay more attention. Both the king and the soldiers should be in service. What would you think of a king whose soldiers disperse and run away from him? Also, the foundations in the previous level, such as knowledge and action consistent with it, are not to be demolished in this level, but must be built upon.

[101] The word *'tajreed'* (تجريد) means stripping, and it refers to what may be called minimalism; however, this is not limited to possessing few clothes or less furniture, but goes beyond that to wanting less of all the desirables such as wealth, strength, fame, distinction, recognition, acceptance, etc. Our contracted awareness of the desirables that compete with the pleasure of God in our hearts could be devastating, particularly for those who are able to control their desires for obvious carnal pleasures.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) points out that these desirables are not all the same. Those which help you on your journey to God are to be sought, and those which impede you or distract you are to be shunned.

One to the True One alone[102]	1. مِمَّا دُونَ الْحَقِّ إِلَى الْحَقِّ
2. then, from beholding one's fleeing to beholding the True One	2. ثُمَّ مِن شُهُودِ الْفِرَارِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ
3. then, fleeing from fleeing (to the True One) to the True One[103]	**3.** ثُمَّ الْفِرَارُ من الْفِرَارِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ

[102] That is, when nothing distracts you from seeking Him and journeying to His nearness.

[103] That is, when your will vanishes into His and subsists by His, so there is no more fleeing.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim expounds on these degrees and says that the best condition is to behold one's fleeing by Allah (His support), from Allah (His displeasure), to Allah (His pleasure), and to fulfill the requirements of servitude in every vision.

Station 9: Training
ar-Riyâḍah (الرِّيَاضَةُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And they who give what they give while their hearts are fearful...} *[al-Mu'minoon 23:60]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{وَالَّذين يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ}.

Training is accustoming oneself to accepting the truth.[104] It is of three levels:

الرِّيَاضَةُ تَمْرِينُ النَّفْسِ عَلَى قَبُولِ الصِّدْقِ، وَهِي على ثَلَاث دَرَجَاتٍ:

The training of the public:

1. refinement of manners with knowledge
2. purification of deeds with devotion
3. fulfilment of all rights in interactions

رِيَاضَةُ الْعَامَّةِ

1. وَهِيَ تَهْذِيبُ الْأَخْلَاقِ بِالْعِلْمِ
2. وَتَصْفِيَةُ الْأَعْمَالِ بِالْإِخْلَاصِ
3. وَتَوْفِيرُ الْحُقُوقِ فِي الْمُعَامَلَةِ

The training of the select few:

1. ending dispersion[105]
2. refraining from looking back at the station one has transcended[106]
3. keeping knowledge flowing in its

ورِياضَةُ الْخَاصَّةِ

1. حَسْمُ التَّفَرُّقِ
2. وَقَطْعُ الِالْتِفَاتِ إِلَى الْمَقَامِ الَّذِي جَاوَزَهُ
3. وَإِبْقَاءُ الْعِلْمِ يَجْرِي

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[104] To speak it and accept it from those who speak it.

[105] Blocking off all distractions and concentrating on the goal.

[106] He must always be seeking to rise and get closer and never accept regression.

tracts[107]	مَجَاريه
The training of the topmost:	وريَاضَةُ خَاصَّةِ الْخَاصَّةِ
1. beholding the True One alone[108]	1. تَجْرِيدُ الشُّهُودِ
2. ascension towards togetherness[109]	2. وَالصُّعُودُ إِلَى الْجَمْعِ
3. rejection of all objections[110] and substitutions[111]	3. وَرَفْضُ الْمُعَارَضَاتِ وَالْمُعَاوَضَاتِ

[107] Meaning keeping knowledge of the Revelation as a guide and not succumbing to the satanic temptations to give precedence to tastes, feelings, and opinions.

[108] This includes refraining from beholding one's beholding. As we said before, the highest level is full awareness of one's actions and one's dependence on Allah in these actions and in every regard. In the last station, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim's statement was quoted: "fleeing from Allah, to Allah, by Allah." You should behold all of that and show servitude in each vision.

[109] Being with Allah alone in your thoughts and deeds.

[110] You do not object to His commands, nor do you object to His decrees.

[111] Your worship is not for immediate compensation, but for the ultimate prizes of His pleasure, nearness, and love.

Station 10: Hearing
as-Samâ' (السَّمَاعُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them hear...} *[al-Anfâl 8:23]*

نُكْتَةُ السَّمَاعِ حَقِيقَةُ الانْتِبَاهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The heart of this matter is the realization of full attention. It is of three levels:

سَمَاعُ الْعَامَّةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء
1. إِجَابَةُ زَجْرِ الْوَعِيدِ رَغْبَةً
2. وَإِجَابَةُ دَعْوَةِ الْوَعْدِ جَهْدًا
3. وَبُلُوغُ مُشَاهَدَةِ الْمِنَّةِ اسْتِبْصَارًا

The hearing of the public, which has three parts:
1. responding to the deterring threats with keenness[112]
2. responding to the enticing invitation with resolve
3. the insightful beholding of favors[113]

وَسَمَاعُ الْخَاصَّةِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاء
1. شُهُودُ الْمَقْصُودِ فِي كُلِّ رَمْزٍ
2. وَالْوُقُوفُ على الْغَايَةِ

The hearing of the select few is of three parts:
1. beholding the intended (God) in all symbols[114]

[112] Despite fear of the threats, one is keen on earning His pleasure.
[113] Whatever one was allowed to hear is from the favors of Allah.
[114] God is the intended, and beholding Him in all signs pointing to Him is the quality of the select few. They also hear from Him (by listening attentively to His Book), by Him (by removing the ego and

2. beholding the purpose of all living things
3. riddance from enjoying dispersion[115]

فِي كُلِّ حَيٍّ

3. والخَلاصُ مِنَ التَّلَذُّذِ بالتَّفَرُّقِ

The hearing of the topmost:

1. eliminates all the faults of disclosure[116]
2. joins *al-abad* (eternity without end) to *al-azal* (eternity without beginning)
3. returns the endings to the beginning[117]

وَسَمَاعُ خَاصَّةِ الْخَاصَّةِ

1. سَمَاعٌ يَغْسِلُ الْعِلَلَ عَنِ الْكَشْفِ
2. ويَصِلُ الأَبَدَ بِالأَزَلِ
3. وَيرُدُّ النِّهاياتِ إِلَى الأَوَّلِ

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biases from the middle and beseeching His guidance), and for Him (by removing all intentions other than seeking His pleasure).

[115] One may benefit from learning the different thoughts, views, opinions, and angles of approach to the Word of God, but one may not allow these to cloud his or her intents so that they become desirable for themselves; they may in this case distract the heart from reaping the benefits of His words.

[116] The essence of what is heard may be subject to adulteration and frustration by misconceptions and interferences from the mediums through which they are transmitted. Once the pure disclosure touches the receptive heart, it results in the desired effect.

[117] Joining *al-abad* to *al-azal* and the ends to the beginning is the fruit of the realization that what happens in *al-abad* has been known to Him since *al-azal*, and what was decreed in *al-azal* will come to pass in *al-abad*, thus to Him they are like one point. One who realizes this will be seeking only *al-azali* (the One without beginning), since all the *ḥawâdith* (existences with beginnings) are dependent on Him and in need of Him.

SECTION II: THE GATES

AL-ABWÂB (الأبْوَاب)

As for the division of the gates, they are ten:	وَأما قسم الأبْوَاب فَهُوَ عشرَة أبْوَاب وَهِي:
1. grief	1. الْحُزْنُ
2. fear	2. وَالْخَوْفُ
3. concern	3. والإشْفَاقُ
4. humility	4. والخُشُوعُ
5. capitulation	5. والإخْبَاتُ
6. asceticism	6. والزُّهْدُ
7. pious caution	7. والْوَرَعُ
8. dedication	8. والتَّبَتُّلُ
9. hope	9. والرَّجَاءُ
10. aspiration	10. وَالرَّغْبَةُ

Station 11: Grief
al-Ḥuzn (الْحُزْنُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...they turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief...} *[Surat at-Tawbah 9:92]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{تَوَلَّوا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا}.

Grief[118] is the feeling of agony over something that was lost or frustration over something that is unattainable, and it is of three levels:

الْحُزْنُ تَوَجُّعٌ لِفَائِتٍ أو تَأَسُّفٌ عَلَى مُمْتَنِعٍ، وَله ثَلَاثُ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the grief of the public, and this is grief over:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى حُزْنُ الْعَامَّةِ وَهُوَ حُزْنٌ

1. negligence in service

1. على التَّفْرِيطِ فِي الْخِدْمَةِ

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[118] Ibn al-Qayyim points out in *Madârij* that grief is a station the seekers are destined to go through, but Allah did not demand it of them, encourage them to seek it, or wish for them to stay in it. In fact, grief is never mentioned in the Qur'an except in the context of being prohibited or dispraised as unbefitting of the believers. *Farah* (joy) is mentioned in different verses sometimes as something commendable and sometimes as something condemnable, so it is a certain type of joy that Allah wants for us. The seekers, however, are bound in this *dunyâ* to go through the station of grief, because of its nature as well as their weaknesses, but they must seek Allah's help to depart from it to the stations of *riḍâ* (acceptance), *ṭuma'neenah* (serenity), and *suroor* (joy).

2. falling into the predicament of aloofness[119]
3. loss of days[120]

2. وعَلَى التَّوَرُّطِ فِي الْجَفَاءِ
3. وعَلى ضَيَاعِ الْأَيَّامِ

The second level is the grief of the people of resolve, and it is over:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَة حُزْنُ أَهلِ الْإِرَادَةِ وَهُوَ حُزْنٌ عَلَى:

1. loss of time in dispersion[121]
2. occupation with other than *shuhood* (beholding the One)
3. distraction from grief[122]

1. تَعَلُّقِ الْوَقْتِ بِالتَّفَرُّقِ
2. وعَلى اشْتِغَالِ النَّفْسِ عَنِ الشُّهُودِ
3. وعَلى التَّسَلِّي عَنِ الْحُزْنِ

The elite have nothing to do with the station of grief. However, the third level of *ḥuzn* (grief) is:

وَلَيْسَت الْخَاصَّة من مقَامِ الْحُزْنِ فِي شَيْءٍ وَلَكِن الدَّرَجَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ

1. grief because of the alternations of states,[123] not mere impulses
2. conflicting pursuits[124]

1. التَّحَزُّنُ لِلْعَارِضَاتِ دُونَ الْخَوَاطِرِ
2. وَمُعَارِضَاتُ الْقُصُودِ

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[119] When sins distance them from Allah, or their distantness befalls them in sins and shortcomings.

[120] Without the joy of earning His pleasure.

[121] Dispersion in the valleys of vanity. The togetherness of the heart will be only with its Maker.

[122] When the glamor of the *dunyâ* overtakes one's thoughts. It could also be grieving over vanities distracting the person from the praiseworthy grief.

[123] When one is in a state of affinity/friendliness with Allah and then a state of reverence overtakes it, or a state of fear overtakes one of hope.

[124] When one falls into the quandary of choosing between conflicting pursuits and finds difficulty in ascertaining what is more

3. objections to the decrees[125] 3. وَالاعْتِرَاضَاتُ عَلَى الأَحْكَامِ

pleasing to Allah, and determining their impartiality and that they succeeded in escaping from the urges of their ego.

[125] These could be the orders of Allah or His universal decrees. The objection to the order at this level is when one is removed from a state (*ḥâl*) by an order and they feel resistance in their heart to leaving their *ḥâl* to comply with the order. Here, one must give primacy to the knowledge of the Revelation. Objecting to the universal decrees at this level is by merely desiring otherwise. For some, it could also be the failure of the immediate taking of shelter in the station of *riḍâ*.

Station 12: Fear
al-Khawf (الخَوْف)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.} *[an-Naḥl 16:50]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُم مِّن فَوْقِهِمْ}.

Fear means being removed from the assurance of security[126] upon beholding the news [of Allah's warnings], and it is of three levels:

الخَوْفُ هُوَ الانْخِلاعُ عَنْ طُمَانِينَةِ الأَمْنِ بِمُطَالَعَةِ الخَبَرِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the fear of punishment, and this is the fear through which faith is validated,[127] and it is the fear of the masses. It originates from:

1. believing the warnings
2. being mindful of the offenses
3. being watchful of the consequences[128]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى الْخَوْفُ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ، وَهُوَ الْخَوْفُ الَّذِي يَصِحُّ بِهِ الْإِيمَانُ، وَهُوَ خَوْفُ الْعَامَّةِ، وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ:

1. تَصْدِيقِ الْوَعِيدِ
2. وَذِكْرِ الْجِنَايَةِ
3. وَمُرَاقَبَةِ الْعَاقِبَةِ

The second level is fear of the plotting

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ

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[126] A certain predecessor of heedlessness, callousness, indifference, weakness of religious commitment, and spiritual lethargy.

[127] For the complete lack of fear means complete lack of *eemân*.

[128] Those who believe the warnings of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, believe in the hereafter (the ending), and recognize the gravity of their offenses and shortcomings will also be vigilant (have *taqwâ*).

[of Allah] while one rejoices in the times of wakefulness that are mixed with the sweetness [of faith].[129]

خَوْفُ الْمَكْرِ فِي جَرَيَانِ الْأَنْفَاسِ الْمُسْتَغْرِقَةِ فِي الْيَقَظَةِ، الْمَشُوبَةِ بِالْحَلَاوَةِ.

For the elite among the believers, there is not a desolation of fear, but only the awe (*haybah*) of [Divine] reverence.[130]

وَلَيْسَ فِي مَقَامِ أَهْلِ الْخُصُوصِ وَحْشَةُ الْخَوْفِ، إِلَّا هَيْبَةَ

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[129] This is the fear of the people who have good states of faith. They will not feel secure until they meet their Lord and secure their place in paradise. The first level of fear is that which is simply called *'khawf'* (خوف) because it involves a level of fright that moves one away from sin; the second level may be called *'khashyah'* (خشية), which also falls under the category of fear but involves a level of *sukoon* (composure) befitting of those actively engaged in obedience.

At-Tirmidhi reported from 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Sa'eed ibn Wahb that 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ عَنْ هَذِهِ الآيَةِ: (وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ) قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ أَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يَشْرَبُونَ الْخَمْرَ وَيَسْرِقُونَ قَالَ " لاَ يَا بِنْتَ الصِّدِّيقِ وَلَكِنَّهُمُ الَّذِينَ يَصُومُونَ وَيُصَلُّونَ وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ وَهُمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ لاَ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ"

"I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about this *âyah*:
{And those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear...} *[al-Mu'minoon 23:60]*
'Are they those who drink *khamr* (wine, alcohol) and steal?'
He said: 'No, O daughter of aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. They are those who fast, pray, and give charity while they fear that their Lord will not accept it from them:
{It is these who hasten to do good deeds, and they are the foremost of them.} *[al-Mu'minoon 23:60]*'"

[130] *Al-Muqarraboon* (in the passive voice) are the ones who are brought close to their Lord. They do not have the desolation of remoteness. Their fear is all about the necessary *haybah* (awe) that

الإِجْلَالِ، وَهِيَ أَقْصَى
دَرَجَةٍ يُشَارُ إِلَيْهَا فِي
غَايَةِ الْخَوْفِ وَهِيَ هَيْبَةٌ
تُعَارِضُ الْمُكَاشَفَ أَوْقَاتَ
الْمُنَاجَاةِ، وَتَصُونُ
الْمُسَامِرَ أَحْيَانَ
الْمُسَامَرَةِ، وَتَفْصِمُ
الْمُعَايِنَ بِصَدْمَةِ الْعِزَّةِ.

It is the highest ranking to be identified at the peak [of the station] of fear. It is awe that is encountered by the one in [a state of] disclosure during times of soft conversation. It protects the witness/ observer during the time of friendly (nightly) dialogues, and it strikes the eyewitness/beholder with the shock of [Divine] might.

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will prevent them from overstepping their limits with their Lord after He lets them into His presence, close to Him.

Station 13: Sympathetic Concern
al-Ishfâq (الإِشْفَاقْ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{They will say: Indeed, we were previously among our people fearful [of displeasing Allah].} *[aṭ-Ṭoor 52:26]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ: {قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ}.

Ishfâq[131] is constant concern combined with empathy. It is of three levels:

الْإِشْفَاقُ: دَوَامُ الْحَذَرِ، مَقْرُونًا بِالتَّرَحُّمِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level:

1. *ishfâq* for one's soul from transgressing into defiance[132]
2. *ishfâq* for the deeds from being wasted[133]
3. *ishfâq* for the people out of knowledge of their excuses[134]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى

1. إِشْفَاقٌ عَلَى النَّفْسِ أَنْ تَجْمَحَ إِلَى الْعِنَادِ
2. وَإِشْفَاقٌ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ أَنْ يَصِيرَ إِلَى الضَّيَاعِ
3. وَإِشْفَاقٌ عَلَى الْخَلِيقَةِ لِمَعْرِفَةِ مَعَاذِيرِهَا

The second level includes *ishfâq* for:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ

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[131] To fear and feel for the suffering of oneself or others, prompting one to act or extend help.

[132] Rebelling against any of the requirements of *'uboodiyah* (servitude).

[133] Deeds could be wasted by corrupted intentions or conceitedness, among other destroyers.

[134] Despite their excuses not availing them from the consequences of their wrongdoing, one may still feel pity for the people who lose their souls to the *Shayṭân* and their own inequities.

1. the time being blemished by dispersion
2. the heart being obstructed by an impediment[135]
3. one's certainty being undermined by [beholding] any cause[136]

The third level:

1. *ishfâq* that protects one's work from conceitedness[137]
2. *ishfâq* that protects him or her from conflict with the people[138]
3. *ishfâq* that keeps the seeker seriously committed

1. إِشْفَاقٌ عَلَى الْوَقْتِ أَنْ يَشُوبَهُ تَفَرُّقٌ
2. وَعَلَى الْقَلْبِ أَنْ يُزَاحِمَهُ عَارِضٌ
3. وَعَلَى الْيَقِينِ أَنْ يُدَاخِلَهُ سَبَبٌ

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

1. إِشْفَاقٌ يَصُونُ سَعْيَهُ عَنِ الْعُجْبِ
2. وَيَكُفُّ صَاحِبَهُ عَنْ مُخَاصَمَةِ الْخَلْقِ
3. وَيَحْمِلُ الْمُرِيدَ عَلَى حِفْظِ الْجِدِّ

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[135] Spiritual lethargy, temptations, misconceptions, or any hindrances that will keep the heart from proceeding on its journey.

[136] This is not to say that one should not believe in *asbâb* (causes), such as belief being a cause for reward and disbelief being a cause for punishment. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim has cautioned in his commentary that the sheikh's overemphasis on the concept of *fanâ'* (annihilation) and undermining the causes may cause misunderstanding and confusion. It is hoped that the sheikh meant that beholding the causes should not prevent one from having full faith in the Causer and being assured of His ultimate control.

[137] Pretention destroys the deed before it comes into existence and conceitedness destroys it afterwards.

[138] For conflict with the people corrupts one's manners and compromises the wellbeing of our hearts.

Station 14: Submissive Solemnity
al-Khushoo' (الْخُشُوع)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive[139] at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?} *[al-Ḥadeed 57:16]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَن تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ}.

Khushoo' is the inertness of the *nafs* and docility of the character[140] before someone glorious or fearsome.[141] It is of three levels:

الْخُشُوعُ خُمُودُ النَّفْسِ وَهُمُودُ الطِّبَاعِ لِمُتَعَاظِمٍ أَوْ مُفْزِعٍ. وَهُوَ عَلى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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[139] It is the combination of calmness and humility. There are other implications of the word *khushoo'* as well, such as submissiveness, shyness, attentiveness, fear, and reverence.

[140] Notice how he mentions the inertness of the *nafs* (lifelessness of the ego) before the docility of character, because the true *khushoo'* is the one that is rooted in the heart; whatever shows of it in one's character and exterior is some of its fruits. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) saw a man bending his neck down. He said to him, "Straighten your neck; *khushoo'* is not about the necks, it is about the hearts."

[141] This is the reward-worthy *khushoo'*. Some people naturally have malaise; this should not be mistaken for *khushoo'*. There are those who fake *khushoo'* for praise and flattery by people. However, the only *khushoo'* that will earn us the reward of Allah is that which

The first level:

1. showing humble submission to the commands[142]
2. surrender to the decrees[143]
3. brokenness under the sight of the True One[144]

The second level:

1. watching the flaws of oneself and one's actions
2. observing the virtue of the virtuous above oneself, and their favors[145]
3. embracing the soft winds of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation)[146]

The third level:

1. staying respectful during times of disclosure[147]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. التَّذَلُّلُ لِلْأَمْرِ
2. وَالِاسْتِسْلَامُ لِلْحُكْمِ
3. وَالِانْصِيَاعُ لِنَظَرِ الْحَقِّ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. تَرَقُّبُ آفَاتِ النَّفْسِ وَالْعَمَلِ
2. وَرُؤْيَةُ فَضْلِ كُلِّ ذِي فَضْلٍ عَلَيْكَ
3. وَتَنَسُّمُ نَسِيمِ الْفَنَاءِ

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. الْحُرْمَةِ عِنْدَ الْمُكَاشَفَةِ
2. وَتَصْفِيَةُ الْوَقْتِ مِنْ

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results from His glorification and love and our recognition of our flaws and errors, leading to humility, shyness, and brokenness.

[142] So Allah's demands and prohibitions are met with submissive compliance.

[143] Where one accepts His decrees with patience and never shows resentment.

[144] Being humbled and broken all the time is only an expected result of our awareness of His watching of us.

[145] Feeling that all people are better than you and never underestimating their favors.

[146] When one is close to taming their greedy, boastful ego and starts smelling the fragrance of the (virtuous) *fanâ'*.

2. freeing one's time from any pretention[148]
3. observing the grace [of God] unhindered[149]

مُرَاءَاةِ الْخَلْقِ

3. وَتَجْرِيدُ رُؤْيَةِ الْفَضْلِ

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[147] When you are in your soft conversations with Allah, and you feel that He is disclosing Himself to you, you stay respectful and within your bounds of servitude.

[148] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim cautions that at this level, this does not merely mean avoiding *riyâ'*, because the seekers at this level are above that, but to hide your true *khushoo'* out of fear that the flattery of the people may become a distraction or a *fitnah* for you.

[149] You observe His grace while recognizing that it is purely a favor from Him, undeserved by you. You acknowledge no cause for it other than His will and no effect for anyone other than Him.

Station 15: Serene Submissiveness
al-Ikhbât (الإخْبَاتُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Give good tidings to the *mukhbiteen* (humble) [before their Lord].} *[al-Ḥajj 22:34]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ}.

Ikhbât[150] is one of the first stations of tranquility. It is finding refuge from reversal and hesitancy.[151] It is of three levels:

الإخْبَاتُ مِنْ أوَائِلِ مَقَامِ الطُّمَأْنِينَةِ، وَهُوَ وُرُودُ الْمَأْمَنِ مِنَ الرُّجُوعِ وَالتَّرَدُّدِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level:

1. when (Divine) protection encompasses the desires[152]
2. when willpower covers

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى

1. أَنْ تَسْتَغْرِقَ الْعِصْمَةُ الشَّهْوَةَ
2. وَتَسْتَدْرِكَ الْإِرَادَةُ

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[150] If *khushoo'* is fear mixed with humility and calmness, *ikhbât* is *khushoo'* with serenity and comfort. These result from having familiarity with and confidence in the One to Whom you surrender. This makes your surrender/submissiveness effortless and a reversal unthinkable.

[151] Now that he/she is not only venerating his/her Lord, but also finding comfort in His presence, he/she is immune to returning on his/her heels or finding reluctance in his/her heart against commitment to any of the requirements of the path.

[152] Thus, no craving is greater than the *'iṣmah* (Divine protection), whose fences are too high for the untamed horses of his or her desires.

heedlessness[153]	الْغَفْلَةَ
3. when the earnest pursuit [of the Beloved] destroys the holds of comfort and leisure[154]	3. وَيَسْتَهْوِي الطَّلَبُ السَّلْوَةَ
The second level:	والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ
1. when no cause can compromise his/her will	1. أَنْ لَا يَنْقُضُ إِرَادَتَهُ سَبَبٌ
2. when no obstacle can cause his/her heart the distress of loneliness[155]	2. وَلَا يُوحِشُ قَلْبَهُ عَارِضٌ
3. when no trial may interrupt his/her path	3. وَلَا تَقْطَعُ عَلَيْهِ الطَّرِيقَ فِتْنَةٌ
The third level is when:	والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ
1. praise and dispraise (by the people) become equal to him/her[156]	1. أَنْ يَسْتَوِيَ عِنْدَهُ الْمَدْحُ وَالذَّمُّ
2. his/her self-reproach becomes constant[157]	2. وَتَدُومَ لَائِمَتُهُ لِنَفْسِهِ
	3. وَيَعْمَى عَنْ نُقْصَانِ

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153 Before this station, they were in a race; at times one outdoes the other, but now his/her willpower is always ahead of his/her heedlessness and saving him/her from its sequelae.

154 No matter how cozy his/her *dunyah* becomes, it never distracts him/her from seeking Allah.

155 Even a lack of companions and supporters will never cause his or her heart to feel lonely and restless.

156 Although the apparent implication of this was not even true for the prophets and messengers, as the Qur'an *(ash-Shu'arâ' 26:84)* tells us that even Ibrâheem (peace be upon him) asked for "a reputation of honor among later generations;" the meaning is that neither praise nor dispraise will ever divert him/her from pursuing the Truth/truth and following Him/it.

3. he/she becomes blind to the lower rankings of the people compared to him/her[158] الْخَلْقِ عَنْ دَرَجَتِهِ

[157] Without getting himself or herself overwhelmed. 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "When hearts become overwhelmed, they become blind."

[158] Whereby he or she does not see himself/herself as better than anyone. When such thoughts come across his/her heart and they have some merit, he/she dismisses them by remembering that all he/she has (or has accomplished) is all a favor from Allah, which He may take back anytime He pleases. He/she also remembers that "deeds are judged by their conclusions."

Station 16: Disinterest
az-Zuhd (الزُّهْد)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{What remains [lawful] from Allah is best for you...} *[Hood 11:86]*[159]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ}.

Zuhd in something refers to its complete renunciation. It is an act of virtue for the public, a necessity for the seeker,[160] and a refuge for the elite.[161] It is of three levels:

الزُّهْدُ إِسْقَاطُ الرَّغْبَةِ عَنِ الشَّيْءِ بِالْكُلِّيَّةِ وَهُوَ لِلْعَامَّةِ قُرْبَةٌ، وَلِلْمُرِيدِ ضَرُورَةٌ، وَلِلْخَاصَّةِ خَشْيَةٌ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level: renunciation of all dubious matters after complete abstention from the unlawful ones. This is motivated by:

1. fear of blame[162]
2. graceful avoidance of shortcomings[163]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى الزُّهْدُ فِي الشُّبْهَةِ، بَعْدَ تَرْكِ الْحَرَامِ:
1. بِالْحَذَرِ مِنَ الْمَعْتَبَةِ
2. وَالْأَنَفَةِ مِنَ الْمَنْقَصَةِ
3. وَكَرَاهَةِ مُشَارَكَةِ الْفُسَّاقِ

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[159] What you earn after you give up cheating and all forms of misconduct in business will be more blessed and better for you.
[160] It is a prerequisite for the path of purification.
[161] Who fear losing their place with Allah to the pursuit of fulfilment of desires. They hold fast to the station of *zuhd* lest the *dunyâ* distract them.
[162] These dubious matters are not *ḥarâm* in themselves, so sin may not be earned. However, those people fear blame from Allah on the Day of Judgment for coming close to *ḥarâm*.

3. hating the company of the wicked[164]

The second level: renunciation of excesses and anything beyond necessary sustenance

1. by the best investment of one's time[165]
2. by stemming anxiety[166]
3. by adorning oneself with the beautiful qualities of the prophets and *aṣ-ṣiddeeqeen*[167]

The third level: renunciation of renunciation, accomplished by three things:

1. belittling that which you renounced[168]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ الزُّهْدُ فِي الْفُضُولِ. وَهُوَ مَا زَادَ عَلَى الْمُسْكَةِ وَالْبَلَاغِ مِنَ الْقُوتِ:

1. بِاغْتِنَامِ التَّفَرُّغِ إِلَى عِمَارَةِ الْوَقْتِ
2. وَحَسْمِ الْجَأْشِ
3. وَالتَّحَلِّي بِحِلْيَةِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ الزُّهْدُ فِي الزُّهْدِ، وَهُوَ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. اسْتِحْقَارُ مَا زَهِدْتَ فِيهِ
2. وَاسْتِوَاءُ الْحَالَاتِ عِنْدَكَ
3. وَالذَّهَابُ عَنْ شُهُودِ

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[163] Those who deem themselves above deficiencies hold themselves to a higher standard all the time.

[164] So you leave the places they crowd and avoid competing with them for the lowly desires they cherish.

[165] In sowing the seeds for the final harvest and getting closer to the Most Beloved (exalted is He).

[166] So that the heart becomes settled with no disturbances, regrets, ambivalence, or hesitation caused by any remaining attachments to the *dunyâ*.

[167] *Aṣ-ṣiddeeqeen:* this refers to the people close to the prophets in the quality of spiritual excellence.

[168] Nothing is too big to leave for Allah's sake; in comparison to His pleasure, all things are insignificant.

2. complete indifference to variant conditions[169]
3. refraining from seeing your actions and casting your sight towards the valley of truths[170]

الاِكْتِسَابِ، نَاظِرًا إِلَى وَادِي الْحَقَائِقِ

[169] Where wealth and poverty, health and sickness, recognition and desertion, and all other variances become equal to you. At the least, none of them will distract you from His service. They will not cause you excessive joy or grief. They will not cause you resentment of His decrees or boastfulness. They will not keep you from believing that which is true, acting upon it, and speaking it.

[170] So you are not seeing your renunciation or even your ability to renounce anything, for you see only His actions and decrees. Your sight is fixated on the ultimate truths of Him being the Ultimate Effector, the One, the Truth.

Station 17: Pious Conscientiousness
al-Wara' (الْوَرَعُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{And your clothing purify.} *[al-Muddath-thir 74:4]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ}.

Wara'[171] is meticulous cautiousness out of worry or conscientiousness out of glorification.[172] It is the end of the station of *zuhd* for the public and the beginning of it for the *mureed* (seeker).[173] It is of three levels:[174]

الْوَرَعُ تَوَقٍّ مُسْتَقْصًى عَلَى حَذَرٍ، أو تَحَرُّجٌ عَلَى تَعْظِيمٍ. وَهُوَ آخِرُ مَقَامِ الزُّهْدِ لِلْعَامَّةِ، وَأَوَّلُ مَقَامِ الزُّهْدِ لِلْمُرِيدِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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[171] This has also been translated as piety, extreme piety, pious caution, pious avoidance, etc.

[172] Some avoid deficiencies out of self-respect. Devotional *wara'* is out of fear and glorification of Allah. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim comments here that he did not mention love, because love without glorification does not produce *wara'*. However, one might also add that it is love with glorification that produces the greatest levels of *wara'*.

[173] Imam Ibn Taymiyyah has said, "*Wara'* is the avoidance of that which is harmful for your hereafter and *zuhd* is the avoidance of that which is not beneficial for it." While there is overlap between *wara'* and *zuhd*, the *zuhd* of the *mureed* (seeker) goes beyond *wara'*.

[174] One may also add that what is to be avoided is of three levels: 1) *ḥarâm*, 2) *makrooh* and *shubhah* (doubtful), and 3) excesses of *mubâḥ*. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) had the greatest level of *wara'* without excessiveness or fakeness. Due to the difficulty of practicing their level of *wara'*, one must prioritize.

The first level is the avoidance of that which is ugly

1. for the protection of oneself
2. for the growing and preservation of good deeds[175]
3. for the safeguarding of *eemân* (faith)[176]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى تَجَنُّبُ الْقَبَائِحِ

1. لِصَوْنِ النَّفْسِ
2. وَتَوْفِيرِ الْحَسَنَاتِ
3. وَصِيَانَةِ الْإِيمَانِ

The second level is to stay within the bounds of that which is harmless

1. to maintain integrity and piety
2. to rise above lowliness
3. to avoid trespassing the bounds (of Allah)

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ حِفْظُ الْحُدُودِ عِنْدَ مَا لَا بَأْسَ بِهِ

1. إِبْقَاءً عَلَى الصِّيَانَةِ وَالتَّقْوَى
2. وَصُعُودًا عَنِ الدَّنَاءَةِ
3. وَتَخَلُّصًا عَنِ اقْتِحَامِ الْحُدُودِ

The third level is avoiding any call to

1. dispersion[177]
2. attachment to distractions[178]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ التَّوَرُّعُ عَنْ كُلِّ دَاعِيَةٍ تَدْعُو إِلَى

1. شَتَّاتِ الْوَقْتِ
2. وَالتَّعَلُّقِ بِالتَّفَرُّقِ

One must avoid *shubhah* when it relates to the rights of others and when it is considered unethical or sub-ethical by their society. For the student of knowledge who follows a *madh-hab*, transferring to another *madh-hab* for concessions is *ḥalâl*, but must not be done excessively whereby one picks all easy positions in all *madh-habs*. For the layperson without a *madh-hab*, the same applies to asking many different scholars.

[175] For being busy with that which is suboptimal will ruin them or at least distract you from earning them.

[176] For ugly conduct undoubtedly detracts from one's faith, since faith increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience.

[177] Losing the focus on seeking the Divine and His pleasure.

3. interferences that detract from togetherness (with Allah)[179] .3 وَعَارِضٍ يُعَارِضُ حَالَ الْجَمْعِ

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[178] Because once the focus is lost, one gets attached to a myriad of pursuits and cravings.

[179] For vanishing (*fanâ'*) into this togetherness is considered by Imam al-Harawi the ultimate goal. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim comments here that *baqâ'* (subsistence) in conformity to His will and in pursuit of His pleasures is higher because *fanâ'* into Him is the servant's desire and *baqâ'* for Him and by Him is the Lord's desire.

[All praise be to Allah, and may His blessings and peace be upon His final Messenger.

Wara' is important for every believer at all times. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"دَعْ مَا يَرِيبُكَ إِلَى مَا لاَ يَرِيبُكَ"

"Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt." (Reported by at-Tirmidhi on the authority of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali.)

Having said that, there are some important details to add here:

- Fake *wara'* is disgraceful.
  One may not practice *wara'* from the excesses of *mubâḥ* while indulging in *ḥarâm* or *shubuhât* (dubious matters). The students of knowledge used to use each other's ink-pots. Imam Aḥmad himself used to avoid that out of *wara'*. However, when one of the students sought his permission to use his ink-pot, he said, "This is dark (i.e., flawed) *wara'*."
- Relativity is real and must be heeded by the preachers in our times.
  Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

" إِنَّكُمْ فِي زَمَانٍ مَنْ تَرَكَ مِنْكُمْ عُشْرَ مَا أُمِرَ بِهِ هَلَكَ ثُمَّ يَأْتِي زَمَانٌ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْهُمْ بِعُشْرِ مَا أُمِرَ بِهِ نَجَا "

"You are in a time when whoever abandons a tenth of what he has been ordered is ruined. Then, there will come a time

in which whoever does a tenth of what he has been ordered shall be saved." (Reported by at-Tirmidhi with a controversial chain, yet it was authenticated by some scholars of *ḥadeeth*, and its meaning is consistent with the following legal maxim:

"إذا ضَاقَ الأمْرُ اتَّسَعَ"

"When a matter constricts, it eases,"
which falls under the following comprehensive maxim:

"المَشَقَّةُ تَجْلِبُ التَّيْسِيرَ"

"Hardships warrant concessions.")

- Picking concessions and *wara'*
  As mentioned above: For the student of knowledge who subscribes to a *madh-hab*, transfer to another *madh-hab* for needed concessions is *ḥalâl*, but must not be done excessively whereby one picks all easy positions in all *madh-habs*. For the layperson without a *madh-hab*, the same applies to asking different scholars until they find an answer that suits them. For the highest levels of *wara'*, one may avoid all things that were forbidden or discouraged in any *madh-hab*, unless he/she is certain of the validity of the easier opinion.
- Plan of action
  - Leave that which is *ḥarâm*
  - Then, the *shubhah* that pertains to people's rights
  - Then, the *makrooh* that takes away from your integrity and spiritual dignity
  - Then, what is considered sub-ethical in your society—consideration of norms and customs
  - Then, as your state of *eemân* rises, advance as tolerated, while watching your *wara'* and verifying that it is sincere and genuine]

Station 18: Devotion
at-Tabattul (التَّبَتُّل)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{... and devote yourself to Him with [complete] devotion.} *[al-Muzzammil 73:8]*[180]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا}.

Tabattul is complete dedication.[181] His saying *"ilayhi"* ("to Him") is an invitation to absolute detachment. It is of three

التَّبَتُّل الِانْقِطَاعُ بِالْكُلِّيَّةِ، وَقَوْلُهُ "إِلَيْهِ" دَعْوَةٌ أَيِ التَّجْرِيدِ

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[180] This is about complete dedication shown in the night prayers after one is done with his or her worldly occupations. Complete dedication of the body, heart, and mind is demanded and encouraged at certain times. Complete dedication of the heart is always demanded.

[181] No contradiction

Muslim reported from Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib: "I heard Sa'd (ibn Abi Waqqâṣ) saying that 'Uthman ibn Maz'oon's thoughts about *tabattul* (celibacy) were rejected (by the Messenger), and had he been given permission, we would have gotten ourselves castrated."

The *hadith* obviously does not contradict the verse, but it shows that the same word may sometimes apply to different concepts, and the *Shari'ah* may validate some of them and reject others. The unfailing measuring stick is the teachings and life of the Messenger ﷺ and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

Tabattul in the sense of solitude and shunning the community is generally forbidden or disliked. Some forms of it may be suitable for certain people due to their personal inclinations or their inability to uphold their principles while engaging challenging realities.

levels:

الْمَحْضِ. وَهُوَ عَلى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the complete detachment from the self-interests and observation of the world in fear or hope, or with any concern. He or she does that by:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى تَجْرِيدُ الِانْقِطَاعِ عَنِ الْحُظُوظِ وَاللُّحُوظُ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ، خَوْفًا أَوْ رَجَاءً أَوْ مُبَالَاةً بِحَالٍ:

1. cutting off hope (in this world) by contentment[182]
2. cutting off fear (from this world) by submission
3. disregarding all concerns (about this world) by observing the truth[183]

1. بِحَسْمِ الرَّجَاءِ بِالرِّضَى
2. وَقَطْعِ الْخَوْفِ بِالتَّسْلِيمِ
3. وَرَفْضِ الْمُبَالَاةِ بِشُهُودِ الْحَقِيقَةِ

The second level is the complete detachment from oneself by:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ تَجْرِيدُ الِانْقِطَاعِ عَنِ التَّعْرِيجِ عَلَى النَّفْسِ

shunning passions

1. embracing the breeze of *uns*

1. بِمُجَانَبَةِ الْهَوَى

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[182] If you are content with what He gives you, you will not lose your dignity or morality pursuing more from this world.

[183] The truth is that all the creations and their actions are under the complete control of their Creator. Why, then, should you be concerned about this world when your dedication to Him should suffice you? Obviously, this is not an invitation to *tawâkul* or negligence, but true *tawakkul*, where one makes the provisions Allah has ordered him or her to make, and then has complete reliance on Him. When one is incapable of making these provisions, they should still have complete reliance on Allah, because those provisions are but causes, but He is the Ultimate Causer and Effector.

(comforting intimacy with Allah) .2 وَتَنَسُّمِ رَوْحِ الْأُنْسِ

2. beholding flashes of disclosure[184] .3 وَشَيْمِ بَرْقِ الْكَشْفِ

The third level is the complete dedication to triumphing by: وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ تَجْرِيدُ الِانْقِطَاعِ إِلَى السَّبْقِ:

1. correcting one's uprightness[185] .1 بِتَصْحِيحِ الِاسْتِقَامَةِ
2. being consumed in reaching the goal .2 وَالِاسْتِغْرَاقِ فِي قَصْدِ الْوُصُولِ
3. witnessing the beginnings of *jam'* (union)[186] .3 وَالنَّظَرِ إِلَى أَوَائِلِ

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[184] When He discloses to you the way to the various stations, the flaws of your *nafs*, and, most importantly, the meanings of His names and attributes.

[185] By reassessment of its correctness and its sincerity and purifying uprightness from the flaws of uprightness.

[186] *Jam'*(جمع): union, unity, gathering, togetherness with Allah.

The valid concept of union (which is different from the heretic belief of *ḥulool* and *ittiḥâd*, translated as Divine indwelling and union) is when your will completely conforms to His, so you are one with Him in purpose. It also refers to the state of being with Allah, cut off from worldly pursuits and cravings. More importantly, it refers to observing the unity and oneness of the Real, the Eternal, the First, the Origin, the Source, the Ultimate Effector, the Self-Sufficient One, and observing that all else (*ghayr*) is true because He is the True Creator, but at the same time, they are contingent upon His will and manifestations of it. Additionally, all events in the universe are also true but again, they are nothing but manifestations of His names.

Farq فرق (separation, distinction, difference, variance) is the opposite of *jam'* when it means separation from Him or *tafarruq* تفرق (meaning diversion, dispersion, and distractibility). In this case, it is obviously negative. However, when it means distinction (as when

one observes the multiplicity of the creations and created phenomena), then it is not negative unless it causes *tafarruq*.

One must be aware of *jam'* and *farq* in the sense that he or she must observe the multiplicity from their angle, because Allah's wants of us vary according to our circumstances. For example, one must distinguish between His commands and prohibitions and His decrees that He likes—such as the faithfulness of the believers—and His decrees that He dislikes—such as the rejection of the disbelievers. Noticing the *farq* (variances, differences, distinctions, multiplicity) in these things is essential while acknowledging the unity of the Origin, the Maker, the Owner, and the Controller, and working towards your *jam'* (togetherness) with Him. The observation of these differences will enable you to move to the highest level of *'uboodiyah* (servitude), where your highest pursuit is not what you want of your Lord, but what He wants of you. The comforting intimacy (*uns*) you feel during *dhikr* (remembrance) will not then keep you from walking to the *masjid* to catch the *jamâ'ah* (congregational prayer) or entertaining your guest when they arrive or tending to the needs of your family, etc. You are doing all that because it is what He wants of you in those circumstances.

Station 19: Hope
ar-Rajâ' (الرَّجَاءُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day.} *[al-Aḥzâb 33:21]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ}.

Hope is the weakest of the stations for the *mureed* (seeker) because in a way it is interference, and in a way objection.[187] This is all but imprudence in the *madh-hab* of this assembly.[188] The

الرَّجَاءُ أَضْعَفُ مَنَازِلِ الْمُرِيدِ؛ لِأَنَّهُ مُعَارَضَةٌ مِنْ وَجْهٍ، وَاعْتِرَاضٌ مِنْ وَجْهٍ، وَهُوَ وُقُوعٌ فِي الرُّعُونَةِ فِي مَذْهَبِ هَذِهِ الطَّائِفَةِ، إِلَّا مَا

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[187] The pure and recommended hope entails neither interference nor objection. The messengers, their companions, and their followers always asked Allah for His favors in this life and the next. *Du'â'* (supplication), which the Prophet ﷺ considered the essence of worship, is all about hope. The Qur'an demands us to invoke Allah's mercy and generosity. Yes, some may lack acceptance of the decrees of Allah, and these people would be exhibiting interference with His will and objecting to it. This is not the hope that was praised in the Revelation and practiced by the greatest of believers.

[188] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim points out that the reason Imam al-Harawi may have erred in this point is his praiseworthy surrender to the decrees, which may have kept him from looking at the other sides of this issue. What Imam al-Harawi means to say here is that one should have no want other than what Allah has already wanted for

them. One should be accepting of His decrees, even if they were decreed to be tormented. Ibn al-Qayyim says that they may be excused if they went through a stance where they felt extreme contentment and submission that they would think that they would be still accepting of any decree, including their own torment.

Ibn al-Qayyim teaches us how to disagree very politely, but very assertively, with someone while still calling them 'my sheikh' and 'Sheikh ul-Islam.' He apologizes to Imam al-Harawi that he had to disagree with him, but he points out that while Imam al-Harawi is beloved to him, the truth is even more beloved. Here is some of what Ibn al-Qayyim has said in this regard:

وَاللهُ يَشْكُرُ لِشَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ سَعْيَهُ وَيُعْلِي دَرَجَتَهُ وَيَجْزِيهِ أَفْضَلَ جَزَائِهِ وَيَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُ فِي مَحَلِّ كَرَامَتِهِ. فَلَوْ وَجَدَ مُرِيدُهُ سِعَةً وَفُسْحَةً فِي تَرْكِ الِاعْتِرَاضِ عَلَيْهِ وَاعْتِرَاضِ كَلَامِهِ، لَمَا فَعَلَ. كَيْفَ وَقَدْ نَفَعَهُ اللهُ بِكَلَامِهِ، وَجَلَسَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مَجْلِسَ التِّلْمِيذِ مِنْ أُسْتَاذِهِ، وَهُوَ أَحَدُ مَنْ كَانَ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ فَتْحُهُ يَقَظَةً وَمَنَامًا؟ وَهَذَا غَايَةُ جُهْدِ الْمُقِلِّ فِي هَذَا الْمَوْضِعِ. فَمَنْ كَانَ عِنْدَهُ فَضْلُ عِلْمٍ فَلْيَجُدْ بِهِ، أَوْ فَلْيَعْذُرْ، وَلَا يُبَادِرْ إِلَى الْإِنْكَارِ. فَكَمْ بَيْنَ الْهُدْهُدِ وَنَبِيِّ اللهِ سُلَيْمَانَ؟ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ لَهُ: (أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ) وَلَيْسَ شَيْخُ الْإِسْلَامِ أَعْلَمَ مِنْ نَبِيِّ اللهِ، وَلَا الْمُعْتَرِضُ عَلَيْهِ بِأَجْهَلَ مِنْ هُدْهُدِ. وَبِاللهِ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ.

May Allah recompense Sheikh ul-Islam [al-Harawi] for his work and elevate his ranking and grant him the best of reward and gather us with him in the abode of His graciousness. Had his *mureed* (seeker) found a concession not to disagree with him and comment disapprovingly on his statements, he would have not. Why not, when Allah has benefited him (Ibn al-Qayyim referring to himself) with his words, and he sat before him like a student sits before his *ustâdh*? He was one of those through whom he was granted *fatḥ* (unsolicited gifts) during wakefulness and sleep. This is the most exertion of this limited (person) concerning this issue. Whosoever has more knowledge, let him graciously share it, or excuse (me) and hasten not to condemnation, for how far is the distance between the hoopoe and Prophet Sulaymân, and despite that he said to him: {...I have encompassed that which you have not encompassed...} *[an-Naml 27:22]* And Sheikh ul-Islam [al-Harawi] is not more knowledgeable than Prophet Sulaymân and this objector is not

فيه من فَائِدَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ولَهَا نَطَقَ باسْمِهِ التَّنْزِيلُ وَالسُّنَّةُ، ودخل في مسالك المحققين، وَتِلْكَ الْفَائِدَةُ أَنَّهُ يَفْثَأُ حَرَارَةَ الْخَوْفِ، حَتَّى لَا يَعْدُوَ إِلَى الإِيَاسِ. والرَّجَاءُ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

only exception is that it entails one benefit, for which it was mentioned in the Revelation and the *Sunnah*, and it was included in the practice of the discerning individuals. This benefit is in cooling down the heat of fear, so that it does not turn into despair.[189] Hope is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى رَجَاءُ يَبْعَثُ الْعَامِلَ عَلَى الِاجْتِهَادِ وَيُوَلِّدُ التَّلَذُّذَ بِالْخِدْمَةِ وَيُوقِظُ الطِّبَاعَ لِلسَّمَاحَةِ بِتَرْكِ الْمَنَاهِي

The first level is a type of hope that:
entices the worker to excel
causes enjoyment of service
awakens one's nature to refrain from prohibitions with ease

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ رَجَاءُ أَرْبَابِ الرِّيَاضَاتِ أَنْ يَبْلُغُوا مَوْقِفًا تَصْفُو فِيهِ هِمَمُهُمْ: بِرَفْضِ الْمَلْذُوذَاتِ وَلُزُومِ شُرُوطِ الْعِلْمِ وَاسْتِقْصَاءِ حُدُودِ الْحِمْيَةِ

The second level is the hope of the practitioners of (spiritual) training in reaching a position whereby their intentions become purified (and this happens) by:
rejecting pleasures (of the *dunyâ*)

---

more ignorant than a hoopoe. And Allah is the one sought for help, and He knows best.

[189] Hope has many other benefits. It entails having good thoughts of Allah. It is about embracing His attributes of *jamâl* (beauty), such as His forgiveness, compassion, and generosity. It brings the servant to His doors and keeps him or her there. Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in *Madârij* many more benefits of hope.

complying with the requirements of knowledge[190]

excelling in self-restraint

The third level is the hope of the pure hearted, and this is hope in meeting the True (glorified is He), which:

1. causes longing
2. dampens (the pleasures of) this life[191]
3. causes disinterest towards the creations[192]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ رَجَاءُ أَرْبَابِ طِيبِ الْقُلُوبِ، وَهُوَ رَجَاءُ لِقَاءِ الْحَقِّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

1. الْبَاعِثُ عَلَى الِاشْتِيَاقِ
2. الْمُنَغِّصِ لِلْعَيْشِ
3. الْمُزَهِّدِ فِي الْخَلْقِ

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[190] Conforming to the *Shari'ah* by seeking knowledge and acting on it.

[191] Whereby one dislikes how they keep them from reaching their goal.

[192] Because he or she does not need them anymore. He/she also recognizes how they hinder him/her from his or her goal. However, those who help him or her during the journey are gifts from Allah that he/she should be grateful for.

Station 20: Desirous Quest
ar-Raghbah (الرَّغْبَةُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...and to invoke Us, being desirous of (reward) and in awe.} *[al-Anbiyâ 21:90]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا}.

Raghbah (desirous quest) is closer to the truth than *rajâ'* (hope) and above it. This is because *rajâ'* (hope) is an aspiration that lacks verification[193] and *raghbah* is a quest upon verification [of the safety of the path].[194] *Raghbah* is of three levels:

الرَّغْبَةُ أَلْحَقُ بِالْحَقِيقَةِ مِنَ الرَّجَاءِ؛ وَهِيَ فَوْقَ الرَّجَاءِ، لِأَنَّ الرَّجَاءَ طَمَعٌ يَحْتَاجُ إِلَى تَحْقِيقٍ وَالرَّغْبَةُ سُلُوكٌ عَلَى التَّحْقِيقِ.
وَالرَّغْبَةُ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the *raghbah* of the people of the transmitted reports, which results from knowledge[195] and thereby
1. stimulates striving that is dependent

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى رَغْبَةُ أَهْلِ الْخَبَرِ، تَتَوَلَّدُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
1. فَتَبْعَثُ عَلَى الِاجْتِهَادِ الْمَنُوطِ بِالشُّهُودِ
2. وَتَصُونُ السَّالِكَ عَنْ

---

193 Because you hope in the reward of Allah, but you have no guarantee you are deserving of it.

194 Ibn al-Qayyim cautions that *raghbah* is also a desirous quest for something that is not guaranteed. However, he agrees that *raghbah* is higher than *rajâ'*, which is a mere aspiration, whereas *raghbah* is the desirous quest that results from this aspiration, just like *harab* (escape) results from *khawf* (fear).

195 The beneficial knowledge that is based on the transmitted reports (the Qur'an, the *Sunnah*, and the sayings of the Companions and righteous predecessors).

upon *shuhood* (vision)[196]

2. protects the journeyer from the lassitude of exhaustion
3. prevents its possessor from reverting to the shortcoming of (following) concessions[197]

وَهَنِ الْفَتْرَةِ

3. وَتَمْنَعُ صَاحِبَهَا مِنَ الرُّجُوعِ إِلَى غَثَاثَةِ الرُّخَصِ

The second level is the *raghbah* of the dwellers of a spiritual state (*ḥâl*),[198] and this is a *raghbah* that:

1. does not leave any potential

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ رَغْبَةُ أَرْبَابِ الْحَالِ. وَهِيَ رَغْبَةٌ:

1. لَا تُبْقِي مِنَ الْمَجْهُودِ إِلَّا مَبْذُولًا

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[196] This vision takes place in the *maqâm* of *iḥsân* where one worships Allah as if they see Him. There is no ranking above this. Ibn al-Qayyim cautions that the *fanâ'* considered by many Sufis to be the highest station is not above this station. The valid concepts of *fanâ'* are included in this station of *iḥsân*. The invalid concepts take away from one's status and do not add to it. A *muḥsin* who worships Allah as if they see Him will not be distracted by the creations (including themselves) and will not favor their pleasure over His. This is the valid concept of *fanâ'*.

[197] Concessions are not all the same. Allah loves that His concessions be used by His servants, as the Prophet ﷺ indicated. Some of them are mandatory to use, like the eating of something *ḥarâm* in the case of necessity; some are recommended, like breaking the fast during burdensome travel; some may be superior, like many of the concessions in the sanctioned *madh-habs* and *ijtihâd* for those who need them. Over time, people can ascend in *warâ'* by needing less and less of these last concessions. Some are forbidden, like pursuing the errors of the scholars or every easy position in every *madh-hab*.

[198] Here, the *raghbah* is an irresistible urge by the dweller of these states. Ibn al-Qayyim gives the parable of moths being attracted to light.

energy unexhausted

2. does not let resolve fade out
3. does not leave any aspiration except in the *maqṣood* (the goal that is sought)

2. وَلَا تَدَعُ لِلْهِمَّةِ ذُبُولًا
3. وَلَا تَتْرُكُ غَيْرَ الْقَصْدِ مَأْمُولًا

The third level is the *raghbah* of the people of *shuhood* (vision), and this is an ultimate excursion accompanied by extreme vigilance that annihilates all dispersion.[199]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ رَغْبَةُ أَهْلِ الشُّهُودِ، وَهِيَ تَشَرُّفٌ يَصْحَبُهُ تَقِيَّةٌ، لَا تُبْقِي مَعَهُ مِنَ التَّفَرُّقِ بَقِيَّةً.

[199] The excursion to reach the point of *fanâ'* accompanied by extreme worry that some distraction may bar them from it. The ultimate result is complete annihilation of all dispersion where the *hamm* (concern) becomes only one and the *maqṣood* (the sought goal) becomes only one. At this level, one would have already walked away far enough from their ego that it will not cause them any setbacks.

SECTION III: THE DEALINGS

AL-MU'ÂMALÂT (المُعَامَلات)

The section of dealings consists of ten chapters. They are:	وأمَّا قِسْمُ المُعَامَلاتِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوَابٍ وَهِيَ
1. caring	1. الرِّعَايَةُ
2. watchfulness	2. والمُرَاقَبَةُ
3. sanctification	3. والحُرْمَةُ
4. devotion	4. والإخلاص
5. refinement	5. والتهذيب
6. straightness	6. والاستقامة
7. reliance	7. والتوكل
8. delegation	8. والتفويض
9. trust	9. والثقة
10. submission	10. والتسليم

Station 21: Caring
ar-Ri'âyah (الرِّعَايَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...but they did not observe it [monasticism] with due observance...}[200] *[al-Ḥadeed 57:27]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
﴿فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا﴾.

Caring is about safeguarding [what is precious] through diligence, and it is of three levels. The first level is taking care of the actions. The second level is taking care of the states (*aḥwâl*). The third level is taking care of the times.

الرِّعَايَةُ صَوْنٌ بِالْعِنَايَةِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ. الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: رِعَايَةُ الْأَعْمَالِ. وَالثَّانِيَةُ: رِعَايَةُ الْأَحْوَالِ. وَالثَّالِثَةُ: رِعَايَةُ الْأَوْقَاتِ.

Taking care of the actions means:

1. developing them by belittling them[201]
2. establishing them without observing them[202]

فَأَمَّا رِعَايَةُ الْأَعْمَالِ
1. فَتَوْفِيرُهَا بِتَحْقِيرِهَا
2. وَالْقِيَامُ بِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ نَظَرٍ إِلَيْهَا
3. وَإِجْرَاؤُهَا عَلَى

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[200] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim remarks in *Madârij as-Sâlikeen* that they were blamed for not taking care of an act they prescribed for themselves. It is worse to not care about an act Allah prescribed for us.

[201] As long as you see your acts of worship too small to be befitting of the greatness and generosity of your Lord, they will continue to grow.

3. performing them in accordance with the knowledge (of their proper conditions), not for self-adornment

مَجْرَى الْعِلْمِ، لَا عَلَى التَّزَيُّنِ بِهَا

Taking care of the states (*aḥwâl*) means that one considers:

وَأَمَّا رِعَايَةُ الْأَحْوَالِ فَهُوَ أَنْ يَعُدَّ:

1. their excelling ostentatious
2. their certainty groundless[203]
3. their state (*ḥâl*) a mere claim[204]

1. الِاجْتِهَادَ مُرَاءَاةً
2. وَالْيَقِينَ تَشَبُّعًا
3. وَالْحَالَ دَعْوَى

Taking care of the times is for one to:

وَأَمَّا رِعَايَةُ الْأَوْقَاتِ فَأَنْ:

1. pause with every step,[205]
2. then detach from their steps by purifying [the heart] from the ego,[206]
3. then refrain from seeing their

1. يَقِفَ مَعَ كُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ
2. ثُمَّ أَنْ يَغِيبَ عَنْ حُضُورِهِ بِالصَّفَاءِ مِنْ رَسْمِهِ
3. ثُمَّ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ عَنْ شُهُودِ صَفْوِ صَفْوِهِ

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[202] One should not see the burden, amount, or excellence of their actions, but their sight should be fixated on the Lord to Whom they are devoted. Our actions may be veils obstructing our sight if we do not look through and beyond them.

[203] He meant either that they should suspect their certainty and seek to have more, or that the certainty they possess is but a gift from Allah for which they should not claim credit.

[204] Whatever state they are in, they must suspect their existence in that *ḥâl* or *maqâm*; they may be illusions they wish to believe.

[205] To observe one's intention and correct one's action and perfect it with *iḥsân*.

[206] After spending time watching the action to perfect it, they must look beyond it so that it will not be a cause of conceit.

purity[207]

[207] After one has purified their heart from the dirt of conceit, arrogance, over-confidence, and all other poisons, one must not acknowledge that purity because then they may stumble over that very purity and fail to reach their goal: being with Allah, beholding none but Him.

Station 22: Observance
al-Murâqabah (المُرَاقَبَةُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection...} *[at-Tawbah 9:10]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلًّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً}.

Murâqabah (observance) is the constant watching of the ultimate goal, and it is divided into three levels:

الْمُرَاقَبَةُ دَوَامُ مُلَاحَظَةِ الْمَقْصُودِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is *murâqabah* of the Truth [Allah] by constantly walking to Him in the midst of:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى مُرَاقَبَةُ الْحَقِّ تَعَالَى فِي السَّيْرِ إِلَيْهِ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ بَيْنَ:

1. distracting glorification[208] — .1 تَعْظِيمٍ مُذْهِلٍ
2. stirring nearness[209] — .2 وَمُدَانَاةٍ حَامِلَةٍ
3. reviving joy[210] — .3 وَسُرُورٍ بَاعِثٍ

The second level is observing Allah's observation of you by rejecting

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ مُرَاقَبَةُ نَظَرِ الْحَقِّ إِلَيْكَ بِرَفْضِ

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208 The glorification of Allah distracts the traveler from observing *al-ghayr* (all else). This glorification of the beloved is necessary for one to stay within the bounds of servitude. Ibn al-Qayyim has said that any love without glorification leads to audaciousness, aloofness, and loss of status with the Beloved.

209 The closer they get to Him, the greater energy they have to get closer.

210 The joy of serving Him and the sweetness of faith the *'ârifeen* taste will revive, rejuvenate, console, and strengthen the heart through this journey.

all interferences through:

1. shunning any form of objection[211]
2. ending the imprudence of standing in the middle (between oneself and Him)[212]

الْمُعَارَضَةِ

1. بِالْإِعْرَاضِ عَنْ الِاعْتِرَاضِ
2. وَنَقْضِ رُعُونَةِ التَّعَرُّضِ

The third level is being observant of the eternity-without-beginning by noting the antecedence (of Allah):

1. thereby facing the flag of *tawḥeed*[213]
2. observing the materialization of the manifestations of *al-azal* (eternity-without-beginning) in *al-abad* (eternity-without-end)[214]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ مُرَاقَبَةُ الْأَزَلِ، بِمُطَالَعَةِ عَيْنِ السَّبْقِ،

1. اسْتِقْبَالًا لِعِلْمِ التَّوْحِيدِ
2. وَمُرَاقَبَةُ ظُهُورِ إِشَارَاتِ الْأَزَلِ عَلَى أَحَايِينِ الْأَبَدِ
3. وَمُرَاقَبَةُ الْإِخْلَاصِ

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[211] By complete acceptance of His commands through compliance and His decrees through contentment.

[212] When one is conscious of their own self, feelings, thoughts, and aspirations, these veils obstruct them from beholding the ultimate goal and seeking it.

[213] Because when you realize He existed before the existence, and He was there alone, then all the contingent existences that are dependent on Him for their creation and subsistence become so insignificant in your vision/reckoning (*shuhood*) that they will never prevent you from seeing the flag of His oneness and walking to it.

[214] His pre-eternal knowledge will be manifested for eternity, so whatever happens is what He knew and decreed in *al-azal*. He transcends time. Time is His creation.

3. observing the deliverance from the predicament of observance[215] مِنْ وَرْطَةِ الْمُرَاقِبَةِ

[215] While observance is necessary to get here, now it is time to be delivered from all that pertains to the self, including the act of observance, so that one is conscious of nothing but the One. This is the final level of *fanâ'* for Sheikh al-Islam al-Harwai. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim comments that the highest *maqâm* is the (qualified) *fanâ'* of your will and desires and the *fanâ'* of *al-ghayr* (all else) in your vision/reckoning (*shuhood*), and this is when your will conforms to His until it vanishes into it and you desire none but that which He wants. You observe none but Him in your actions as if all the *ghayr* has vanished as they did not exist in *al-azal* (eternity-without-beginning) and you subsist (*baqâ'*) by Him and for Him, observing *al-jam'* (the oneness of the True, the First, the Originator, the Self-Dependent) while in *al-farq* (the multiplicity of the creations and the created phenomena and your own circumstances). Thus, you pray for His remembrance, show hospitality to your guest for His reward, fast and help those in need for His pleasure, and die for His cause. This is when what you want of Him vanishes into what He wants of you.

Station 23: Veteration
al-Ḥurmah (الحُرْمَة)

الحُرْمَةِ قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...and whoever honors the sacred ordinances (*ḥurumāt*) of Allah—it is best for him in the sight of his Lord...}
[al-Ḥaj 22:30]

الْحُرْمَةُ هِيَ التَّحَرُّجُ عَنِ الْمُخَالَفَاتِ وَالْمُجَاسَرَاتِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Veneration (of that which is sacred) means escaping from the destitution of discordance and boldness.[216] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى تَعْظِيمُ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ

The first level is to honor the commands and prohibitions:[217]

1. not out of fear of punishment,

1. لَا خَوْفًا مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ ،

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[216] Disobedience may result from reckless boldness in transgressing that which is sacred and inviolable or mere failure to abide by and commit to that which is required by Allah. Boldness may also refer to the loss of reverence and glorification in the state of intimacy experienced in the third level.

[217] This is the level of Islam (rules of the exterior), followed by the second level (which is about *eemân* [beliefs]), and the third level (which is about *iḥsân*). One may add to the commands and prohibitions all the symbols of Allah and etiquettes of His *deen*. Allah said:

{وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ}

{...And whoever honors the symbols of Allah—indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.} *[al-Ḥaj 22:30]*

for that would be egotistic

2. or out of pursuit of reward, for that is enslavement to the compensation[218]
3. nor even as a demonstration of commitment, for that would be pretentious piety[219]

فَتَكُونُ خُصُومَةً لِلنَّفْسِ؛

2. وَلَا طَلَبًا لِلْمَثُوبَةِ فَيَكُونُ مُسْتَرَقًّا لِلْأَجْرَةِ؛

3. وَلَا شَاهِدًا لِلْجِدِّ، فَيَكُونُ مُتَدَيِّنًا بِالْمُرَايَاةِ فَإِنَّ هَذِهِ الْأَوْصَافَ كُلَّهَا مِنْ شُعَبِ عِبَادَةِ النَّفْسِ.

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[218] This is the often-recurring concept of whether we should be seeking paradise or running away from hell and whether that should be what we pursue through the worship of Allah. In *Madârij as-Sâlikeen*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates on this with his immense knowledge, intellectual vigor, and awareness of the debate over this issue and the arguments of all sides. Here is a very brief summary of the points he makes:

There are two sides to this argument and a middle. One side (mainly that of the Sufis) claims that Allah is deserving of worship even if there is no paradise or hell, and that the true lovers seek none but the pleasure of their Most Beloved. The other side (mainly that of the rationalist scholars) claims that this concept is blasphemous since there are countless verses and hadiths that urge us to seek paradise and run away from the fire and that also indicate that this was the way of the greatest of mankind: the prophets and their disciples. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim says that the middle position is to say that one must seek paradise and run away from hell; however, paradise is not only about the green meadows and carnal pleasures. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* are clear on the ultimate pleasure of paradise being closeness to Allah, seeing Him, and rejoicing in His pleasure. The opposite may also be said about hell. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim also argues that the complete vanishing of will is impossible for a living creature. What is demanded is its complete conformity to the will of Allah. In summary, we are seeking paradise, whose ultimate pleasure is nearness to Allah.

All these are variant forms of self-worship.

The second level is acting upon the apparent scriptural text and acceptance of the milestones of *tawḥeed* that are established in the scriptures and known to the public:

1. he/she does not seek to analyze them unwarrantedly[220]
2. or re-interpret them allegorically
3. or exceed their apparent meaning by resemblance[221]
4. or claim complete comprehension of them or speculate about them

The third level is to:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ إِجْرَاءُ الْخَبَرِ عَلَى ظَاهِرِهِ. وَهُوَ أَنْ تَبْقَى أَعْلَامُ تَوْحِيدِ الْعَامَّةِ الْخَبَرِيَّةِ عَلَى ظَوَاهِرِهَا.

1. لَا يَتَحَمَّلُ الْبَحْثُ عَنْهَا تَعَسُّفًا
2. وَلَا يَتَكَلَّفُ لَهَا تَأْوِيلًا
3. وَلَا يَتَجَاوَزُ ظَوَاهِرَهَا تَمْثِيلًا
4. وَلَا يَدَّعِي عَلَيْهَا إِدْرَاكًا أَوْ تَوَهُّمًا

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

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219 This may mean that one is not working to prove their commitment to themselves. Any goal other than His pleasure is a form of pretention. One may be pretentious in front of themselves. The reward here is self-respect or the feeling of accomplishment rather than the pleasure of Allah.

220 Searching for the essence and ultimate meanings and forms of the unseen, such as the attributes of God, the angels, the hereafter.

221 By likening Allah to His creatures or His attributes to theirs; rather, he establishes His attributes with which He or His Messenger described Him, such as omnipotence, omniscience, speech, love, anger, wisdom, and all the rest of His beautiful and majestic attributes, in a way befitting Him, without denial or distortion, and without likening Allah to His creations or describing the essence of His attributes.

1. protect the (state of) relaxation[222] from being tainted by audacity
2. protect the (state of) joy from being polluted by security[223]
3. protect his/her *shuhood* (the heart's beholding of God) from the veils of the causes[224]

1. صِيَانَةُ الِانْبِسَاطِ أَنْ تَشُوبَهُ جُرْأَةٌ
2. وَصِيَانَةُ السُّرُورِ أَنْ يُدَاخِلَهُ أَمْنٌ
3. وَصِيَانَةُ الشُّهُودِ أَنْ يُعَارِضَهُ سَبَبٌ

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[222] When one finds comfort and relaxation with their Lord. Allah said:

{اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ}

{Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah...} *[az-Zumar 39:23]*

[223] Security from the punishment of Allah and the change of one's state.

[224] We commented before on the consideration and reckoning of causes while believing that Allah is the ultimate Effector and Controller. Those who are blocked by the observation of the apparent causes from the observation of the ultimate Causer will be deprived of His *shuhood* (vision).

Station 24: Devotion
al-Ikhlâṣ (الإخْلَاصُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said: {Most verily, for Allah is the pure (devoted) religion...} *[az-Zumar 39:3]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ"

Devotion is the purification of actions from all scum. It is of three levels:

الْإِخْلَاصُ: تَصْفِيَةُ الْعَمَلِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَوْبٍ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level involves:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. purging the actions from observing them[225]

1. إِخْرَاجُ رُؤْيَةِ الْعَمَلِ عَنِ الْعَمَلِ

2. surviving the plight of demanding compensation[226]

2. وَالْخَلَاصُ مِنْ طَلَبِ الْعِوَضِ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ

3. renunciation of contentment with one's actions[227]

3. وَالنُّزُولُ عَنِ الرِّضَا بِالْعَمَلِ

The second level:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. being ashamed of one's actions while excelling[228]

1. الْخَجَلُ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَعَ بَذْلِ الْمَجْهُودِ

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[225] By beholding their origin and creation by Allah and likening oneself to the leaves of the trees moved by the wind in whichever direction it blows. Ibn al-Qayyim says that observing *al-jabr* (determinism) here is good for the heart.

[226] Serving God because He deserves our service and because His pleasure is our ultimate pursuit.

[227] Whereby one would never see themselves good enough in their service of their Creator and Sustainer.

2. topping off the effort while/by seeking refuge from watching it[229]

2. وَتَوْفِيرِ الْجُهْدِ بِالِاحْتِمَاءِ مِنَ الشُّهُودِ

3. seeing one's actions with the light of *tawfeeq* as a generous gift from the Source of generosity

3. وَرُؤْيَةِ الْعَمَلِ فِي نُورِ التَّوْفِيقِ مِنْ عَيْنِ الْجُودِ

The third level is purifying the action by escaping from the action:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: إِخْلَاصُ الْعَمَلِ بِالْخَلَاصِ مِنَ الْعَمَلِ

1. by allowing it to follow the guide of knowledge (the religious decrees)

1. تَدَعُهُ يَسِيرُ سَيْرَ الْعِلْمِ

2. while you watch the hand of Allah (the universal decrees)

2. وَتَسِيرُ أَنْتَ مُشَاهِدًا لِلْحُكْمِ

3. being free from the captivity of

3. حُرًّا مِنْ رِقِّ الرَّسْمِ

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[228] At-Tirmidhi reported from 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her):

"سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنْ هَذِهِ الآيَةِ: (وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ) قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ أَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يَشْرَبُونَ الْخَمْرَ وَيَسْرِقُونَ قَالَ " لاَ يَا بِنْتَ الصِّدِّيقِ وَلَكِنَّهُمُ الَّذِينَ يَصُومُونَ وَيُصَلُّونَ وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ وَهُمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ لاَ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ"

"I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about this *âyah*:
{And those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear...} *[al-Mu'minoon 23:60]*
'Are they those who drink *khamr* (wine, alcohol) and steal?'
He said, 'No, O daughter of aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. They are those who fast, pray, and give charity while they fear that their Lord will not accept it from them:
{It is these who hasten to do good deeds, and they are the foremost of them.} *[al-Mu'minoon 23:60]*'"

[229] As if you do the good deeds and perfect them, but beware of seeing that perfection—seeing it will spoil the perfection and could destroy you.

all forms[230]

[230] All the manifestations of His omnipotence and might in this *dunyâ*, including your own service, are but the manifestations of His omnipotence and might, so let your heart be attached to Him, not them.

Station 25: Refinement
at-Tahdheeb (التَّهْذِيب)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...But when it set, he said: I like not those that disappear.} *[al-An'âm 6:76]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ}.

Refinement is a test for the beginners. However, it is a beaten path for the seasoned practitioners. It is of three levels:

التَّهْذِيبُ: مِحْنَةُ أَرْبَابِ الْبِدَايَاتِ، وَهُوَ شَرِيعَةٌ مِنْ شَرَائِعِ الرِّيَاضَةِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first is refinement of service, whereby:

1. it does not become spoiled by ignorance[231]

2. it does not become tainted by habituation[232]

3. it does not become the end

الْأُولَى: تَهْذِيبُ الْخِدْمَةِ:

1. أَنْ لَا يُخَالِجَهَا جَهَالَةٌ
2. وَلَا يَشُوبَهَا عَادَةٌ
3. وَلَا يَقِفَ عِنْدَهَا هِمَّةٌ

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[231] Since ignorance will beautify what is ugly and disfigure what is beautiful. It will lead one to choose the inferior over the superior and make them unable to sort out the times where they should be making provisions and watching the commands of their Lord and those where they need to behold the hand of God being in control of all things.

[232] Some may become attached to certain acts of worship that they have become accustomed to, and in which they find comfort. This may make those acts ends, rather than means, to the pleasure of Allah. Renewal of the intention is always needed.

goal of one's resolve[233]

The second is refinement of the *ḥâl* (state). It means:

1. not drifting towards knowledge[234]
2. not being captive to forms[235]
3. not considering any egotistical interests

The third is refinement of the intention, and it involves:

1. purifying it from the humiliation of compulsion[236]
2.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: تَهْذِيبُ الْحَالِ، وَهُوَ:

1. أَنْ لَا يَجْنَحَ الْحَالُ إِلَى عِلْمٍ
2. وَلَا يَخْضَعَ لِرَسْمٍ
3. وَلَا يَلْتَفِتَ إِلَى حَظٍّ

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: تَهْذِيبُ الْقَصْدِ وَهُوَ:

1. تَصْفِيَتُهُ مِنْ ذُلِّ الْإِكْرَاهِ
2. وَتَحَفُّظُهُ مِنْ مَرَضٍ

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[233] One should always aspire to better their service to their Lord and should never be content with the state of their worship.

[234] Knowing the sheikh, it is clear from his life and writings that he is not asking us to ignore the *Shari'ah* and knowledge of the scriptures. However, he may be asking us to avoid technicality or overconfidence in one's knowledge or reliance on it. He may also be referring to cases where the knowledge may not be sufficient to guide someone concerning a particular incident. This is a case where one may count on inspiration (*ilhâm*) and intuitive perception (*dhawq*), as Imam Ibn Taymiyyah states, to find guidance. This is not *dhawq* and *ilhâm* to counter knowledge, but to complement it.

[235] It is not about looking, speaking or acting a certain way, etc. What matters more than the 'how' is the 'why.'

[236] Do not make your relationship with Allah like one between a slave and his slave master. You are his slave and He is your Master, but He is not your slave master. He is your loving Lord, Healer, and Guardian. If you feel overwhelmed, lighten your burden (without

2. avoiding the flaw of lethargy[237]

الْفُتُورِ

3. supporting it against the contentions of knowledge[238]

3. وَنُصْرَتُهُ عَلَى مُنَازَعَاتِ الْعِلْمِ

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neglecting the obligations) so that the journey to Him does not become unpleasant. *Mujâhadah* (striving) should be done with prudence and gradualness. Drive yourself to Him like you would drive a beast of burden on a very long journey.

[237] By renewal of *eemân* and resolve.

[238] The knowledge that will lead your *niyyah* (intention) astray should not be followed. The knowledge that will make you less observant of God and more permissive with yourself is harmful. The knowledge that will make you cunning and deceitful is destructive. The knowledge that will make you concerned only about the reward and punishment is not conducive to love.

Station 26: Straightness
al-Istiqâmah (الاِسْتِقَامَة)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ}.
قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ "إِلَيْهِ" إِشَارَةٌ إِلَى عَيْنِ التَّفْرِيدِ.

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...so take a straight course to Him...} *[Fuṣṣilat 41:6]*[239]

The Almighty's saying 'to Him' is an inference to the true essence of *tafreed* (beholding His singularity).

والاِسْتِقَامَةُ رُوحٌ تَحْيَا بِهَا الْأَحْوَالُ، كَمَا تَرْبُو لِلْعَامَّةِ عَلَيْهَا الْأَعْمَالُ، وَهِيَ بَرْزَخٌ بَيْنَ وِهَادِ التَّفَرُّقِ، وَرَوَابِي الْجَمْعِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

Straightness is a spirit through which all *aḥwâl* (states) come to life, and it is that through which the deeds of the common people increase and blossom. It is a zone in the middle, between the pits of divergence and

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[239] When Sufyân ibn 'Abdullâh came to the Prophet ﷺ, as reported by Muslim, and said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something of Islam about which I will not ask anyone else."

He ﷺ said, "Say, 'I believe in Allah' and then be straight."

The power of the word 'straightness' and the miraculous spontaneity, eloquence, and precision of the Prophet's response becomes clear when you look up some of the synonyms of this word: candor, fairness, faithfulness, honor, integrity, loyalty, morality, probity, rectitude, responsibility, sincerity, trustworthiness, veracity, virtue, conscientiousness, genuineness, goodness, incorruptibility, justness, openness, right, soundness, uprightness. (thesaurus.com)

the peaks of union.[240] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الِاسْتِقَامَةُ عَلَى الِاجْتِهَادِ فِي الِاقْتِصَادِ

The first level is straightness upon striving in moderation:

1. without contravening the scheme of knowledge[241]
2. or overstepping the bounds of devotion[242]
3. or deviating from the way of the *Sunnah*[243]

1. لَا عَادِيًا رَسْمَ الْعِلْمِ
2. وَلَا مُتَجَاوِزًا حَدَّ الْإِخْلَاصِ
3. وَلَا مُخَالِفًا نَهْجَ السُّنَّةِ

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: اسْتِقَامَةُ الْأَحْوَالِ وَهِيَ:

The second level is the straightness of the *aḥwâl* (states); it

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[240] It is your way from the bottoms of dispersion, divergence, and distraction where your sight is concealed from the sun of the truth to the heights of union and togetherness where you can behold it.

[241] The map of the entire journey is drawn in accordance with the knowledge of *Shari'ah*.

[242] The other condition is that of sincerity and devotion; once you act upon the guidance of His *Shari'ah*, seeking His pleasure, you would have fulfilled the requirements of acceptance.

[243] The way of the Messenger ﷺ is either mandatory (which is part of the requirements of acceptance) or preferable (which is necessary for your excellence and conducive to speed and stamina on your journey). The way of the Messenger ﷺ strikes the perfect balance between all extremes. Also, unlike any other guide, following his footsteps will assure you safety, because as he walked, he watched not only for himself, but also for all those who would walk behind him ﷺ. This is not true for any scholar, imam, or sheikh. They may jump over a hole because of their strength or other virtues, while those behind them may fall into it.

concerns:

1. beholding the truth, not as a personal achievement[244]

2. disowning all claims, not only out of/in compliance with knowledge[245]

3. staying in the light of wakefulness, without beholding one's guardianship (of the light)[246]

1. شُهُودُ الْحَقِيقَةِ لَا كَسْبًا

2. وَرَفْضُ الدَّعْوَى لَا عِلْمًا

3. وَالْبَقَاءُ مَعَ نُورِ الْيَقْظَةِ لَا تَحَفُّظًا

The third level is straightness by:

1. not watching (one's) straightness[247]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: اسْتِقَامَةٌ

1. بِتَرْكِ رُؤْيَةِ الِاسْتِقَامَةِ

2. وَبِالْغَيْبَةِ عَنْ تَطَلُّبِ

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[244] So, after you behold the truth, which is the oneness of the One and His complete control over all things, you do not attribute that milestone to yourself or see it as something you earned; rather, be certain that it is His gift to you, and be careful because the One who gave it to you may take it back if He pleases.

[245] Any good state that you experience may lead you into claiming that state. Such claims must all be disowned, not only when you know they are untrue (because that is expected of all people), and not only in conformity with the *adab* (etiquette) of humbleness (because then you would have made the claim and given it up out of humbleness), but rather you should be cognizant of your complete lack of *ḥawl* (influence) and *quwwah* (power).

[246] If you were given that light, do not move away from it. Stay where it is. It is not inherent in you. It is from Him. You do not guard it yourself, but He keeps it on.

[247] The third level is usually devoted to those in the station of self-annihilation (see the wholesome meanings of this station in previous chapters). Here, one will not be watching the path, the

2. being distracted from the pursuit of straightness by beholding the guardianship and straightening of the Truth, mighty is His name[248]

الِاسْتِقَامَةِ بِشُهُودِ إِقَامَةِ الْحَقِّ وَتَقْوِيمِهِ عَزَّ اسْمُهُ

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signposts, their straightness, or anything—including their own vision of the One; all will be eclipsed by Him.

[248] This is the station of beholding His actions, not ours. Our straightness is merely His straightening of us.

Notice that this level does not contradict or nullify the previous ones upon which it was built. One must still be compliant with the requirements of the first level; however, in this pinnacle level, one will not watch their own doing; their will should have by now conformed to His as if it vanished into it. They see no *ghayr* (others)—and they will not, except that which He wills and pleases.

Station 27: Reliance
at-Tawakkul (التَوَكُّل)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers.} *[al-Mâ'idah 5:23]*

التَّوَكُّلُ: كِلَةُ الْأَمْرِ إِلَى مَالِكِهِ، وَالتَّعْوِيلُ عَلَى وِكَالَتِهِ، وَهُوَ مِنْ أَصْعَبِ مَنَازِلِ الْعَامَّةِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَوْهَى السُّبُلِ عِنْدَ الْخَاصَّةِ؛ لِأَنَّ الْحَقَّ تَعَالَى قَدْ وَكَلَ الْأُمُورَ كُلَّهَا إِلَى نَفْسِهِ، وَأَيْأَسَ الْعَالَمَ مَنْ مِلْكِ شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا.
وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ. كُلُّهَا تَسِيرُ مَسِيرَ الْعَامَّةِ.

Reliance is handing over all matters to their (rightful) Owner and counting on His agency. It is one of the hardest stations for the public and one of the weakest paths for the elite.[249] This is because the True One, Most High, has entrusted all matters to Himself and made the world despair of having any ownership of any of them.

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[249] See the discussion of the third level concerning the status of perfect *tawakkul* and it being of the stations of the prophets and messengers of Allah. What the sheikh may have meant here is that the basic forms of *tawakkul* are so easy for the elite who have become completely certain that all *ḥawl* (influence) and *quwwah* (power) belong to Allah alone. The sheikh may have also meant that the elementary forms of *tawakkul* may still lack complete *tafweeḍ* (delegation—a station he discusses in the following chapter), but this would not be applicable to the perfect *tawakkul* the Prophet ﷺ was commanded to observe.

It is of three levels; all of them follow the path of the common people:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: التَّوَكُّلُ مَعَ الطَّلَبِ وَمُعَاطَاةِ السَّبَبِ عَلَى نِيَّةِ:

1. شَغْلِ النَّفْسِ
2. وَنَفْعِ الْخَلْقِ
3. وَتَرْكِ الدَّعْوَى

The first level is reliance accompanied by the pursuit (of needs) and engaging the causes,[250] with the intention of:

1. keeping the *nafs* (inner-self) busy[251]
2. benefiting the creations[252]
3. renouncing the claims[253]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ : التَّوَكُّلُ مَعَ إِسْقَاطِ الطَّلَبِ، وَغَضُّ الْعَيْنِ عَنِ

The second level involves reliance while dropping all

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[250] Relying on Allah while engaging the causes: making provisions and taking precautions. This includes acquiring money, strength, knowledge, and status with the noble intentions below.

[251] Because if the *nafs* is not kept busy with that which is beneficial, it will get busy with that which is harmful.

[252] To benefit oneself and the rest of the creations, including one's family, neighbors, the *Ummah*, humanity at large—and beyond.

[253] Claims of belonging to a higher station. Thus, they will be engaging the causes, so that they deter their *nafs* from making the claim that it is above the pursuit of needs or the engagement of causes; they also use this engagement of the causes so that the people may not ascribe to them higher stations.

appeals[254] and looking beyond the causes:[255]

1. to strive for correcting one's reliance
2. to curb one's excessive aspirations
3. to spare the time for observing obligations

السَّبَبِ

1. اجْتِهَادًا لِتَصْحِيحِ التَّوَكُّلِ
2. وَقْمْعًا لِتَشَرُّفِ النَّفْسِ
3. وَتَفَرُّغًا إِلَى حِفْظِ الْوَاجِبَاتِ

The third level entails having reliance while being fully cognizant

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: التَّوَكُّلُ مَعَ مَعْرِفَةِ التَّوَكُّلِ، النَّازِعَةِ إِلَى

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[254] Not appealing to the creation for any of their needs, but rather seeking them all from God. Muslim reported from Mâlik al-Ashja'i that he said:

"... We said, 'Now tell us, O Messenger of Allah, (for what things) should we pledge allegiance to you?'

He ﷺ said, 'That you would worship Allah alone and would not associate with Him anything, (and observe) five prayers, and obey—and he said one thing in an undertone—and that you would not ask people for anything.'

I saw that some of these people did not ask anyone to pick up the whip for them if it fell down."

In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim says that Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah would say that begging the people is injustice to the Lordship of Allah by looking to other than Him for help, to one's *nafs* by humiliating it, and to the creation by asking them to give up what they love.

[255] In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim points out how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the greatest of the *mutawakkils*, engaged the *asbâb* by proper planning, taking precautions, making provisions, judging matters by their outcomes, etc.

الْخَلَاصِ مِنْ عِلَّةِ التَّوَكُّلِ، وَهِيَ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَنَّ مِلْكَةَ الْحَقِّ تَعَالَى لِلْأَشْيَاءِ هِيَ مِلْكَةُ عَزَّةٍ، لَا يُشَارِكُهُ فِيهَا مُشَارِكٌ فَيَكِلُ شَرِكَتَهُ إِلَيْهِ، فَإِنَّ مِنْ ضَرُورَةِ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ الْعَبْدُ أَنَّ الْحَقَّ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ مَالِكُ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَحْدَهُ.

of its meaning, thereby escaping from the ills of reliance. This is by knowing that Allah's ownership is an ownership of complete might, and that He has no partner who would delegate to Him any of His affairs. It is an essential part of servitude for the servant to know that the True One—exalted is He—is the single Owner of all things.[256]

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[256] The sheikh may be implying that one of the problems of reliance is that the one who is reliant delegates to Allah what is already Allah's, and such delegation is not conceivable. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim extended his apologies to the sheikh that he had to disagree with him on this matter, and mentioned that Allah commanded the best of His creation to have *tawakkul* where he said:

{فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّكَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ}

{So rely upon Allah; indeed, you are upon the clear truth.} (*an-Naml 27:79)*

This means that *tawakkul* is of the highest stations. He went on to contend that perfect *tawakkul* is, in fact, a result of the realization that Allah is the single Owner and Controller of all things, so *tawakkul* is entrusting the Owner with what He owns and relying on Him concerning the needs, affairs, and destiny of His servants, who already recognize their complete lack of *ḥawl* (influence) and *quwwah* (power).

Station 28: Delegation[257]
at-Tafweeḍ (التَّفْوِيضِ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَاكِيًا عَنْ مُؤْمِنِ آلِ فِرعَونَ:
{وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said, while quoting the believer of the family of Pharaoh:

{...and I delegate my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is seeing of [His] servants.} [*Ghâfir 40:44*]

وَهُوَ أَلْطَفُ إِشَارَةً، وَأَوْسَعُ مَعْنًى مِنَ التَّوَكُّلِ، فَإِنَّ التَّوَكُّلَ بَعْدَ وُقُوعِ السَّبَبِ، وَالتَّفْوِيضُ قَبْلَ وُقُوعِهِ وَبَعْدَهُ. وَهُوَ عَيْنُ الِاسْتِسْلَامِ. وَالتَّوَكُّلُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنْهُ.
وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

[Tafweeḍ] is finer in inference and more comprehensive in meaning than *tawakkul* (reliance), because *tawakkul* takes place after engaging the causes, while *tafweeḍ* takes place before and after; and it is at the heart of *istislâm* (surrender), while *tawakkul* is a branch of it.[258]

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[257] Delegation is usually used within the context of handing over a matter to a partner or assistant. Here, it means handing it over to the Lord of all things. When one does, one should never worry about that matter anymore. It entails appealing to Allah for guidance and asking Him to plan for us, and to show us the way and carry us through it, not only to help us take a path we already drew for ourselves.

[258] Imam al-Harawi is hinting that *tawakkul* implies that the servant made up his mind and engaged the causes, while *tafweeḍ* means that they disavowed any *ḥawl* (influence) or *quwwah*

(power) of their own and completely surrendered their affairs to Allah to decide for them.

In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim disagrees with his master, Imam al-Harawi, and argues on behalf of the station of *tawakkul*. He quotes verses of the Qur'an in which Allah ordered His Messenger ﷺ to rely on Him and take Him as a *wakeel* (disposer of affairs). He argues that while *tawakkul* is mentioned so many times in the Qur'an, in different contexts, *tafweeḍ* was mentioned only once, while quoting the believer of the family of Pharaoh. He also argues that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was called *al-Mutawakkil* by Allah Himself, as Bukhari narrates from 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr, who said:

"This verse:

{Indeed, We have sent you, [O Muhammad], as a witness, as a bringer of glad tidings and as a warner}, *[al-Fatḥ 48:8]*

which is in the Qur'an, appears in the Torah thus: 'Verily We have sent you, [O Muhammad], as a witness, as a bringer of glad tidings and as a warner, and as a protection for the illiterates. You are my slave and My Messenger, and I have named you *al-Mutawakkil*.'"

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim argues that complete *tawakkul* includes *tafweeḍ* as well. It is not only after engaging the causes. It is before, with, and after. One may support Ibn al-Qayyim's position here by Allah's saying to His Messenger ﷺ in *Soorat at-Tawbah*:

{قُل لَّن يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ}

{Say: Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector. And upon Allah let the believers rely (make *tawakkul*).} (*at-Tawbah 9:51*)

While *tafweeḍ* may be part of complete *tawakkul*, highlighting its meanings is important so that the people may not have a deficient understanding and practice of *tawakkul*. It is particularly important for people whose hearts are still attached to the causes and therefore they have problems with anxiety, agitation,

It is of three levels:

The first is to know that, before any action, the slave owns no power:

1. so they should not feel safe from [Allah's] plots[259]
2. or despair of His help[260]
3. or count on their own intention[261]

الْأُولَى أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَا يَمْلِكُ قَبْلَ عَمَلِهِ اسْتِطَاعَةً،

1. فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مِنْ مَكْرٍ
2. وَلَا يَيْأَسُ مِنْ مَعُونَةٍ
3. وَلَا يُعَوِّلُ عَلَى نِيَّةٍ

The second is to behold the inevitability of fate:

1. so one will not see salvation in any action[262]
2. or destruction in any sin[263]
3. or effect in any cause[264]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ مُعَايَنَةُ الِاضْطِرَارِ،

1. فَلَا يَرَى عَمَلًا مُنْجِيًا
2. وَلَا ذَنْبًا مُهْلِكًا
3. وَلَا سَبَبًا حَامِلًا

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eagerness, and even transgression to procure what they believe is of benefit to them or their community or nation.

[259] If the intelligent, the strong, and the mighty only knew they have no strength or might in truth, and all power belongs to Allah, the best Plotter, they would never feel secure from His plots.

[260] If the weak only knew that all power belongs to their Lord, they would not despair of His help or lose hope.

[261] Even if your intention is pure and you resolve to do what is good, you still should not count on your intention, because Allah may change it, or your resolve, because Allah may exhaust it.

[262] Because while good deeds are a means to His pleasure, it is by His *faḍl* (graciousness) that we earn salvation.

[263] Because while evil is a means to His displeasure, His forgiveness is always there for the penitent, and His mercy encompasses all things and precedes His anger.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

The third is about:

1. beholding the singularity of the True One concerning His complete control of motion and stillness, and giving and withholding[265]

1. شُهُودُ انْفِرَادِ الْحَقِّ بِمِلْكِ الْحَرَكَةِ وَالسُّكُونِ وَالْقَبْضِ وَالْبَسْطِ

2. knowing the proper administration (of their affairs) in the states of *tafriqah* (multiplicity of their conditions) and *jam'* (union with the One)[266]

2. وَمَعْرِفَتِهِ بِتَصْرِيفِ التَّفْرِقَةِ وَالْجَمْعِ

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[264] The causes were made by Allah to lead to certain effects. We must be respectful of that when we engage them. However, we must be certain and our hearts completely assured that it is He who allows them to lead to those effects, and it is He who could stop the knife from cutting and the fire from burning.

[265] In this level, the seeker is not observing themselves and their actions, but rather Allah and His attributes and actions, including the singularity of His *khalq* (creation), *mulk* (ownership), and *tadbeer* (disposal of affairs) of all that exists. He took no one for a partner or assistant.

[266] One must be aware of *jam'* and *farq* in the sense that he or she must observe the multiplicity from their angle, because Allah's wants of us vary according to our circumstances. For example, one must distinguish between His commands and prohibitions and His decrees that He likes (such as the faithfulness of the believers) and His decrees that He dislikes (such as the rejection of the disbelievers). Noticing the *farq* (variances, differences, distinctions, multiplicity) in those things is essential, while acknowledging the unity of the Origin, the Maker, the Owner, and the Controller, and working towards your *jam'* (togetherness) with Him. The

observation of these differences will enable you to move to the highest level of *'uboodiyah* (servitude), where your highest pursuit is not what you want of your Lord, but what He wants of you. The comforting intimacy (*uns*) you feel during *dhikr* (remembrance) will not then keep you from walking to the *masjid* to catch the *jamâ'ah* (congregational prayer) or entertaining your guest when they arrive or tending to the needs of your family, etc. You are doing all that because it is what He wants of you in those circumstances.

The Prophet ﷺ planned for his *hijrah* (migration) and his battles. He saved food for his family. He is our highest role model. His was the best to make *tafweeḍ*, so we conclude from this that *tafweeḍ* is not opposite to proper and careful planning. It is about knowing that Allah is in ultimate control, and if you are His beloved servant, His planning for you is the best planning. Also, when you plan, you know that you may wish for something and it is bad for you. Your planning, actions, and reflections about the past will not be mixed with incapacitating anxiety, haste, Machiavellianism, cheating or any impropriety, or debilitating grief.

Station 29: Trust
ath-Thiqqah (الثِّقَةِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...when you fear for him, cast him into the river...}[267] *[al-Qaṣaṣ 28:7]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ}.

Trust is the essence of *tawakkul* (reliance), the center of *tafweeḍ* (delegation), and the innermost core of *tasleem* (surrender).[268] It is of three levels:

الثِّقَةُ سَوَادُ عَيْنِ التَّوَكُّلِ وَنُقْطَةُ دَائِرَةِ التَّفْوِيضِ وَسُوَيْدَاءُ قَلْبِ التَّسْلِيمِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the level of despair, which is the slave's hopelessness of fighting off the decrees, thereby abstaining from:

1. لِيَقْعُدَ عَنْ مُنَازَعَةِ

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: دَرَجَةُ الْإِيَاسِ، وَهُوَ إِيَاسُ الْعَبْدِ عَنْ مُقَاوَمَاتِ الْأَحْكَامِ

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[267] The ultimate trust was exhibited by Prophet Moosâ's mother when she cast him in the river upon receiving a revelation from Allah to do so. Obviously, this would not be acceptable without a clear revelation. The clear Revelation for us is that which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ conveyed to us and which the most eminent scholars of our time teach us. Beyond this, there is the inspiration (*ilhâm*) and intuitive perception (*dhawq*) that complement, but never substitute for, the Revelation.

[268] None of those stations is conceivable without trusting in Allah. It is the spirit of those stations and the fountain from which they flow.

1. fighting over the shares (of others)[269]

2. the rudeness of audaciousness[270]

الْأَقْسَامِ

2. لِيَتَخَلَّصَ مِنْ قِحَةِ الْإِقْدَامِ

The second level is the level of security, which is to cease fearing missing what is decreed or the change of what is inscribed, thereby:

1. gaining the delight of contentment, and if not—[271]

2. the certainty of vision,[272] and if not—

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: دَرَجَةُ الْأَمْنِ، وَهُوَ أَمْنُ الْعَبْدِ مِنْ فَوْتِ الْمَقْدُورِ وَانْتِقَاضِ الْمَسْطُورِ

1. فَيَظْفَرُ بِرَوْحِ الرِّضَا

2. وَإِلَّا فَبِعَيْنِ الْيَقِينِ

3. وَإِلَّا فَبِلُطْفِ الصَّبْرِ

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[269] All of this is beautifully articulated in the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ in which he said:

"The holy spirit breathed into my chest that no soul shall die until it finishes its appointed term and earns its set provisions. Therefore, fear Allah and seek your pursuits gracefully." (Reported by Abu Nu'aym in *al-Ḥilyah* from Abu Umâmah)

Gracefulness here is maintaining the most proper conduct towards Allah and His creations.

[270] Of demanding of Him what He has not decreed for you. You would still implore Him for all of your needs, but you will not rush Him or become disappointed if you did not get what you asked for.

[271] Being the highest prize because one may be certain of fate and its inevitability and still not be content, meaning they still have unease in their hearts with the decrees: past, present, or future.

[272] Having complete faith that is like the faith of an eyewitness about what they saw. Also being certain that Allah is sufficient for

3. the relief of patience

The third level is beholding the *azaliyah* (eternity without beginning) of the True One, thereby ridding oneself from:

1. the trials on the way to the goals[273]
2. the unease of defensiveness[274]
3. counting on the elevating means[275]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: مُعَايَنَةُ أَزَلِيَّةِ الْحَقِّ، لِيَتَخَلَّصَ مِنْ:

1. مِحَنِ الْقُصُودِ
2. وَتَكَالِيفِ الْحِمَايَاتِ
3. وَالتَّعْرِيجِ عَلَى مَدَارِجِ الْوَسَائِلِ

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them and everything that happens in their lives is but the materialization of what is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet.

[273] Which will be mitigated by having trust in Allah and His being the Ultimate Goal.

[274] The anxiety of having to protect oneself from all harm.

[275] Taking the proper means to His pleasure and our welfare without counting on their inherent effectiveness in elevating us, except by His grace.

Station 30: Surrender[276]
at-Tasleem (التَّسْلِيم)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.} *[an-Nisâ' 4:65]*

وَفِي التَّسْلِيمِ وَالثِّقَةِ وَالتَّفْوِيضِ مَا فِي التَّوَكُّلِ مِنَ الْعِلَلِ. وَهُوَ مِنْ أَعْلَى دَرَجَاتِ سُبُلِ الْعَامَّةِ.

Tasleem (surrender) has the same flaws of *tafweeḍ* (delegation) and *tawakkul* (reliance).[277] It is of the highest levels of the path of the common people.[278]

وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

It is of three levels:

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[276] Pertinent also are the following terms: submit, give up, give in, hand over, defer, renounce.

[277] Your very thought that you own or possess anything to be delegated or surrendered is the main flaw.

[278] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim explains in *Madârij* how true *tasleem* is of the highest stations of the elite. It is possible that *tasleem*, as perceived by the masses, is what Imam al-Harawi considers the elite to have transcended beyond. It is possible also that Imam al-Harawi perceives all stations short of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation) to be short of the ultimate peak.

The first level is:

1. renunciation of all preconceived conjectures that clutter the mind concerning the unseen[279]
2. submission to the decrees that are counter to logical presumptions concerning the change of states and division of shares[280]
3. engaging conditions and states that are frightening to the seeker[281]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. تَسْلِيمُ مَا يُزَاحِمُ الْعُقُولَ مِمَّا سَبَقَ عَلَى الْأَوْهَامِ مِنَ الْغَيْبِ
2. وَالْإِذْعَانُ لِمَا يُغَالِبُ الْقِيَاسَ مِنْ سَيْرِ الدُّوَلِ وَالْقِسَمِ
3. وَالْإِجَابَةِ لِمَا يُفْزِعُ الْمُرِيدَ مِنْ رُكُوبِ الْأَحْوَالِ

The second level:

1. deferring knowledge to (one's spiritual) state[282]
2.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. تَسْلِيمُ الْعِلْمِ إِلَى الْحَالِ
2. وَالْقَصْدُ إِلَى الْكَشْفِ

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[279] When your preconceived conjectures about the unseen clutter your mind and prevent the Revelation from reforming it.

[280] This one is about accepting His decrees and not contesting or even wondering about them. When you see nations rise and fall; when you see the changes in your conditions and the conditions of those around you; when you see the shares of provisions, power, statuses (including spiritual states) being divided in a way you cannot comprehend, defer to His wisdom.

[281] The Companions responded to Allah's command and marched to confront the Romans with an army of three thousand soldiers scarcely resourced compared to their enemies. If you realize that you must quit your job or leave your homeland, and the *Shayṭân* intimidates you with the prospects of poverty or hardship, remember that your surrender to Allah can never lead to your destruction or ruin. This also may mean moving from one spiritual state to another, as demanded by Allah.

2. deferring premeditated goals to disclosures[283]

3. deferring forms to realities[284]

3. وَالرَّسْمِ إِلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ

The third level:

1. giving up all others for the True One

2. while being clear of seeing the (act of) surrender[285]

3. by beholding the True One's handing you over to Himself[286]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. تَسْلِيمُ مَا دُونَ الْحَقِّ إِلَى الْحَقِّ

2. مَعَ السَّلَامَةِ مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ التَّسْلِيمِ

3. بِمُعَايَنَةِ تَسْلِيمِ الْحَقِّ إِيَّاكَ إِلَيْهِ

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[282] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim cautions in *Madârij* that the sheikh is deemed above what some may wrongly understand from this statement. He would never have meant to allow one's state to be a judge over the knowledge of the Revelation. However, he means that there is something beyond knowledge, which is acting on it. There is also the need to contextualize that knowledge and apply it correctly. Letting the knowledge go through an insightful heart is necessary for its proper application.

[283] If you were in the middle of your way and were shown a different path, take it if you are comfortable with the disclosure, and (obviously) if it does not contradict the Revelation. Also, disclosure may show you the flaws of your intentions and premeditated goals.

[284] Our shapes, attire, positions, rankings, etc. are forms. The work of the interior determines the value of our actions and our real rankings. This may also mean that one beholding the truth/True One will not see any forms or constructs before it/Him.

[285] Because seeing your *tasleem* means being distracted by your own action from beholding His.

[286] After all, what can you do without Him? What would you be without Him? Nothing!

SECTION IV: THE ETIQUETTES

AL-AKHLÂQ (الأخْلاق)

The section on etiquettes contains ten chapters:	وأما قِسْمُ الأخْلاقِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. patience	1. الصَّبْر
2. contentment	2. والرِّضَى
3. gratitude	3. والشُّكْر
4. modesty	4. والحَيَاء
5. truthfulness	5. والصِّدق
6. altruism	6. والإيثَار
7. good nature	7. والخُلْق
8. humility	8. والتَّواضُع
9. nobility	9. والفُتُوَّة
10. relaxation	10. والانبِسَاط

Station 31: Patience

aṣ-Ṣabr (الصَّبْر)[287]

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And be patient, [O Muhammad], and your patience is not but through Allah...} *[an-Naḥl 16:127]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ}.

Ṣabr is forcing oneself to endure hardship and keeping the tongue from complaining. It is one of the hardest stations for the common people, the most alien to the path of love, and the most reprehensible on the path of *tawḥeed*.[288] It is of three levels:

الصَّبْرُ: حَبْسُ النَّفْسِ عَلَى الْمَكْرُوهِ وَعَقْلُ اللِّسَانِ عَنِ الشَّكْوَى، وَهُوَ مِنْ أَصْعَبِ الْمَنَازِلِ عَلَى الْعَامَّةِ، وَأَوْحَشِهَا فِي طَرِيقِ الْمَحَبَّةِ، وَأَنْكَرِهَا فِي طَرِيقِ التَّوْحِيدِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ

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[287] Patience is only one of the meanings of *ṣabr*, which may also mean perseverance and restraint. Some of the antonyms of *ṣabr* include panic, agitation, haste, lethargy, frustration, intolerance.

[288] Imam al-Harawi is trying to point out a valid concept, which is that *riḍâ* (contentment) will prevail on the path of love and complete disregard of the self will prevail on the path of *tawḥeed*. However, it may be contended that concepts like patience, contentment, and grief are not mutually exclusive. As humans, feeling the pain of loss is only natural. When his son died, the best of mankind ﷺ said, "...and we are saddened by your departure, O Ibrâheem." He ﷺ was commanded by Allah to show *ṣabr*:

{وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ}

{And be patient, [O Muhammad], and your patience is not but through Allah.} *(an-Naḥl 16:127)*

دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level: to restrain oneself from sin by beholding the warnings, and to preserve one's *eemân* and avoid the consequences of falling into that which is *ḥarâm*; but better yet, it is to refrain from sin out of shyness.[289]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الصَّبْرُ عَنِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ، بِمُطَالَعَةِ الْوَعِيدِ، إِبْقَاءً عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ، وَحَذَرًا مِنَ الْحَرَامِ؛ وَأَحْسَنُ مِنْهَا الصَّبْرُ عَنِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ حَيَاءً.

The second level: persevering in obedience by worshiping Allah with consistency, guarding one's worship with devotion, and enhancing it with

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: الصَّبْرُ عَلَى الطَّاعَةِ بِالْمُحَافَظَةِ عَلَيْهَا دَوَامًا، وَبِرِعَايَتِهَا إِخْلَاصًا، وَبِتَحْسِينِهَا عِلْمًا.

Allah praised another one of the elite of mankind, Prophet Ayoob, because of his patience. He said:

{إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِّعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ}

{...Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah].} *(Ṣâd 38:44)*

Finally, *ṣabr* is not only about enduring hardship gracefully, but it is also about persevering on the path of righteousness, which requires great resolve.

[289] Being too shy to commit sin knowing that your Lord sees you and being fully aware that you are exposing yourself to His displeasure. This is certainly higher than the station of fear, but it does not negate it and they are not mutually exclusive. Allah praised his prophets for fearing him:

{إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ}

{...they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.} *(al-Anbiyâ' 21:90)*

knowledge.[290]

The third level: endurance through trials, by noticing the great reward, and awaiting the relief and belittling (putting in perspective) the calamity by counting the favors and remembering the previous bounties.

And the weakest patience is the patience for Allah, and that is the patience of the masses. Above this is the patience by Allah, and that is the patience of the seekers. Above this is the patience with Allah, and that is the patience of the wayfarers.[291]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: الصَّبْرُ فِي الْبَلَاءِ، بِمُلَاحَظَةِ حُسْنِ الْجَزَاءِ، وَانْتِظَارِ رَوْحِ الْفَرَجِ وَتَهْوِيْنِ الْبَلِيَّةِ بِعَدِّ أَيَادِي الْمِنَنِ وَبِذِكْرِ سَوَالِفِ النِّعَمِ.

وَأَضْعَفُ الصَّبْرِ الصَّبْرُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ صَبْرُ الْعَامَّةِ. وَفَوْقَهُ الصَّبْرُ بِاللَّهِ وَهُوَ صَبْرُ الْمُرِيدِينَ. وَفَوْقَهُ الصَّبْرُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ صَبْرُ السَّالِكِينَ.

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[290] For the good deeds to be accepted, they must be for the sake of Allah alone and they must follow the knowledge (of the *Sunnah*).

[291] Being patient <u>for</u> Allah is patience in anticipation of His reward. Being patient <u>by</u> Allah is considered higher by Imam al-Harawi because it is about the state (*ḥâl*) of those who disavow any *ḥawl* (influence) or *quwwah* (power) of their own. Being patient <u>with</u> Allah is about enduring acceptingly His decrees. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim contends in *Madârij* that being patient <u>for</u> Allah by compliance with His commands and conforming to His will should be the highest of the stations. The complete believers will do this while disavowing any *ḥawl* (influence) and *quwwah* (power) of their own.

Station 32: Contentment
ar-Riḍâ (الرِّضَا)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{O reassured soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him].} *[al-Fajr 89:27-28]*

He (the Almighty) did not leave any path to Himself for the resentful, and made contentment a condition for the seeker.

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى:

{يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً}.

لَمْ يَدَعْ فِي هَذِهِ الْآيَةِ لِلْمُتَسَخِّطِ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا، وَشَرْطُ الْقَاصِدِ الدُّخُولُ فِي الرِّضَا.

Contentment is a name for the sincere compliance of the servant by standing where they are placed, without seeking any advance or retreat and without seeking any increase or recourse (change of states). It is one of the beginning stations of the path of the elite, and one of the hardest for the common people. It is of three levels:

وَالرِّضَا اسْمٌ لِلْوُقُوفِ الصَّادِقِ، حَيْثُما وُقِفَ الْعَبْدُ. لَا يَلْتَمِسُ مُتَقَدَّمًا وَلَا مُتَأَخَّرًا، وَلَا يَسْتَزِيدُ مَزِيدًا. وَلَا يَسْتَبْدِلُ حَالًا. وَهُوَ مِنْ أَوَائِلِ مَسَالِكِ أَهْلِ الْخُصُوصِ وَأَشَقِّهَا عَلَى الْعَامَّةِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level: the *riḍâ* of the public, which is being pleased with Allah as the Lord, and resenting the worship of anything else. This is the pole of the mill (axis) of Islam. It

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: رِضَا الْعَامَّةِ، وَهُوَ الرِّضَا بِاللهِ رَبًّا، وَتَسَخُّطُ عِبَادَةِ مَا دُونِهِ، وَهَذَا قُطْبُ رَحَى الْإِسْلَامِ، وَهُوَ يُطَهِّرُ مِنَ الشِّرْكِ الْأَكْبَرِ. وَهُوَ

يَصِحُّ بِثَلَاثَةِ شُرُوطٍ:

1. أَنْ يَكُونَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَحَبَّ الْأَشْيَاءِ إِلَى الْعَبْدِ

2. وَأَوْلَى الْأَشْيَاءِ بِالتَّعْظِيمِ

3. وَأَحَقَّ الْأَشْيَاءِ بِالطَّاعَةِ

purifies one from major *shirk*. It is validated by three conditions:

1. that Allah is the most beloved thing to the servant

2. that He is the most glorified thing to him/her

3. that He is the most deserving of his/her obedience

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: الرِّضَا عَنِ اللهِ. وَبِهَذَا نَطَقَتْ آيَاتُ التَّنْزِيلِ. وَهُوَ الرِّضَا عَنْهُ فِي كُلِّ مَا قَضَى وَقَدَّرَ. وَهَذَا مِنْ أَوَائِلِ مَسَالِكِ أَهْلِ الْخُصُوصِ.

The second level: being pleased with (the decrees of) Allah. This is the *riḍâ* that is mentioned in the Revelation. This means to be content with all of the destinies that He has decreed. It is one of the beginning stations on the path of the elite. It is validated by three conditions:

وَيَصِحُّ بِثَلَاثَةِ شَرَائِطَ:

1. بِاسْتِوَاءِ الْحَالَاتِ عِنْدَ الْعَبْدِ

2. وَسُقُوطِ الْخُصُومَةِ مَعَ الْخَلْقِ

1. the evenness of all situations in the sight of the servant[292]

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[292] Not that they will feel the same to him/her, but they will not distract them, slow them down, or change their direction; and with more *riyâḍah* (exercise) and *tawfeeq* (Divine assistance), all events in the *dunyâ* feel less and less significant.

Additionally, while one should always be accepting of Allah's decrees and should never question His ultimate wisdom and benevolence, this does not mean that one will not show concern for human suffering. One also should not be content or pleased with injustice or sin. One should not be indifferent to truth and falsehood. There are countless verses and reports indicating that the pinnacle of all virtues, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was concerned for

2. cessation of all disputation with the creations

3. riddance from demanding and doggedness

3. وَالْخَلَاصِ مِنَ الْمَسْأَلَةِ وَالْإِلْحَاحِ

The third level: being pleased with Allah's pleasure,[293] so the servant is no longer seeing any personal entitlement to pleasure or displeasure, which motivates him/her to:

1. abandon (the pursuit of) control[294]

2. give up choice[295]

3. drop all of his/her discernments,[296] even if they were led into the fire

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: الرِّضَا بِرِضَا اللهِ، فَلَا يَرَى الْعَبْدُ لِنَفْسِهِ سُخْطًا، وَلَا رِضًا، فَيَبْعَثُهُ عَلَى:

1. تَرْكِ التَّحَكُّمِ
2. وَحَسْمِ الِاخْتِيَارِ
3. وَإِسْقَاطِ التَّمْيِيزِ، وَلَوْ أُدْخِلَ النَّارَ

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humanity and was never indifferent to truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, or obedience and sin.

[293] For the sheikh (may Allah be pleased with him), the peak of the path is self-annihilation. Thus, he considers this *riḍâ* the ultimate form of *riḍâ*, whereby the servant has no *riḍâ* or discontentment, but rather his/her will vanishes into that of Allah's. The sanctioned *fanâ'* is the complete conformity of one's will to that of his/her Lord. It is important for the *baqâ'* (subsistence) by Allah, with Him, and for Him.

[294] Being content with his/her Lord being in control, one seeks not to control.

[295] Since he/she is a *mufawwiḍ*, who has delegated their affairs to their Lord: the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and All-Benevolent.

[296] This is not to get rid of the natural perceptions of pain and comfort, but to make all such perceptions irrelevant to their

progress and almost unfelt because of their distraction by their ultimate goal, upon which their eyes and hearts are fixated.

Station 33: Gratefulness
ash-Shukr (الشُّكْرُ)

Allah, the Almighty said:
{...And few of My servants are grateful.} *[Sabâ' 34:13]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَقَلِيلٌ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ}.

Gratefulness refers to the recognition of the bounties, as it is the way to recognizing their Bestower. Because of this, Allah, the Almighty, referred in the Qur'an to Islam and *eemân* as gratefulness.

There are three meanings for gratefulness: the recognition of the bounties, then their acceptance, and finally praising their Bestower.[297] This is still from the paths of the common people.[298]

الشُّكْرُ اسْمٌ لِمَعْرِفَةِ النِّعْمَةِ لِأَنَّهَا السَّبِيلُ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةِ الْمُنْعِمِ، وَلِهَذَا سَمَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْإِيمَانَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ شُكْرًا.

وَمَعَانِي الشُّكْرِ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاءَ: مَعْرِفَةُ النِّعْمَةِ ثُمَّ قَبُولُ النِّعْمَةِ ثُمَّ الثَّنَاءُ بِهَا. وَهُوَ أَيْضًا

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[297] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in *Madârij* that *shukr* rests on five foundations: submissiveness towards the One being thanked, loving Him, acknowledging His favor, praising Him for it, and using it only in that which He likes.

[298] Because in the sheikh's view, all the stations short of self-annihilation are not befitting of the elite. When one reaches *fanâ'*, all one's feelings will have been extinct, so they will not discern between bounties and calamities. As we said before, the *fanâ'* that is sanctioned does not require the complete extinction of the self, which is impossible, but it requires the complete conformity to the will of God. That self will not be distracted by the awe of His glorification from complying with His injunctions and conforming to

مِنْ سُبُلِ الْعَامَّةِ.

It is of three levels:

وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is showing gratitude for desirables, and this type of gratefulness is shared by Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. It is of the vastness of His mercy (exalted is He) that He considered it gratefulness, promised in return more bounties, and made it reward-worthy.

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الشُّكْرُ عَلَى الْمَحَابِّ، وَهَذَا شُكْرٌ تَشَارَكَتْ فِيهِ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَالْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسُ. وَمِنْ سِعَةِ رَحْمَةِ الْبَارِي سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ عَدَّهُ شُكْرًا، وَوَعَدَ عَلَيْهِ الزِّيَادَةَ، وَأَوْجَبَ فِيهِ الْمَثُوبَةَ.

His will. Additionally, the station of *shukr* is the station of the most elite of all times, the messengers of Allah. Allah said about Nooḥ (peace be upon him):

{إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا}

{...Indeed, he was a grateful servant} *(al-Isrâ' 17:3)*

and about Ibrâheem (peace be upon him):

{شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ}

{[He was] grateful for His favors...} *(an-Naḥl 16:121)*

and said to Muhammad ﷺ:

{بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ}

{Rather, worship [only] Allah and be among the grateful}, *(az-Zumar 39:66)*

who used to say to 'Â'ishah when she wondered why he prayed until his feet cracked:

"أَفَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا"

"Should I not prove myself to be a grateful servant (of Allah)?" (Agreed upon)

The second level is showing gratitude in distress. This is shown by one of two people: one to whom all situations are equal, and that is to show contentment; and one who discerns between the different situations, so as to suppress their rage, conceal their complaints, observe proper etiquette [with their Lord], and conform with the [revealed] knowledge. These grateful ones are the first to be invited to paradise.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: الشُّكْرُ فِي الْمَكَارِهِ، وَهَذَا مِمَّنْ تَسْتَوِي عِنْدَهُ الْحَالَاتُ إِظْهَارًا لِلرِّضَا وَمِمَّنْ يُمَيِّزُ بَيْنَ الْأَحْوَالِ لِكَظْمِ الْغَيْظِ وَسَتْرِ الشَّكْوَى وَرِعَايَةِ الْأَدَبِ وَسُلُوكِ مَسْلَكِ الْعِلْمِ. وَهَذَا الشَّاكِرُ أَوَّلُ مَنْ يُدْعَى إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ.

The third level is when the servant beholds nothing but the Bestower of the bounties,

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: أَنْ لَا يَشْهَدَ الْعَبْدُ إِلَّا الْمُنْعِمَ،

1. so when he/she does that from the position of servitude, they will elevate the bounty;
4. فَإِذَا شَهِدَ الْمُنْعِمَ عُبُودِيَّةً اسْتَعْظَمَ مِنْهُ النِّعْمَةَ
2. and from the position of love, they will find sweetness in difficulty (decreed) by Him;
5. وَإِذَا شَهِدَهُ حُبًّا اسْتَحْلَى مِنْهُ الشِّدَّةَ
3. and from the position of *tafreed* (acknowledgment of His oneness), they will not recognize any bounty or hardship.[299]
6. وَإِذَا شَهِدَهُ تَفْرِيدًا لَمْ يَشْهَدْ مِنْهُ نِعْمَةً

[299] Because all things are from the One (exalted is He). While all things are from Him and from that perspective they cannot be described as evil because His master plan is about goodness, they

وَلَا شَدَّة.

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are still different from our angle: belief and disbelief, obedience and sin, justice and injustice, virtue and vice—they all exist in this world; they are different and they must not be reacted to with indifference. This is *al-farq* (discernment of the multiplicity of this world) that must be beheld with the *jam'* (the union with God, the One, the First Cause) at all times for proper realization of His demands from us.

Station 34: Modesty
al-Ḥayâ' (الْحَيَاءِ) [300]

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{Does he not know that Allah sees?} *[al-'Alaq 96:14]*

قَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ}.

Ḥayâ' is one of the first steps on the stairway for the elite. It arises from glorification that rests on a foundation of love.[301] It is of three levels:

الْحَيَاءُ مِنْ أَوَّلِ مَدَارِجِ أَهْلِ الْخُصُوصِ، يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ تَعْظِيمٍ مَنُوطٍ بِوُدٍّ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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[300] *Ḥayâ'* means many things, so it could be translated as modesty, shyness, bashfulness, shame, decency, or dignity. It comes from the same root as *ḥayâh*, which means life. A living conscience and *ḥayâ'* are mutually inclusive. The opposite of it is having no shame. Abu Mas'ood al-Anṣâri reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحْيِ فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ"

"If you have no shame, do whatever you like." (Bukhâri)

Ḥayâ' should not be reduced to a dress code, even though it is part of it. It is not an address to women only. Muslim reported from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَشَدَّ حَيَاءً مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ فِي خِدْرِهَا وَكَانَ إِذَا كَرِهَ شَيْئًا عَرَفْنَاهُ فِي وَجْهِهِ

"Allah's Messenger ﷺ was more modest than the virgin in her private quarters, and when he disliked anything, we recognized that in his face."

[301] *Ḥayâ'* is firstly about your shyness from Allah to be seen by Him in a position or state He disapproves. At-Tirmidhi reported from 'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

The first level is a type of *ḥayâ'* that results from the servant's realization of the Lord's beholding of him/her.

1. This entices him/her to endure the struggle
2. causes him/her to see the ugliness of his/her crimes
3. and keeps him/her from complaining

The second level is *ḥayâ'* that results from beholding the flags of nearness, thus

1. inviting one to ride the mount of love,

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى حَيَاءٌ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ عِلْمِ الْعَبْدِ بِنَظَرِ الْحَقِّ إِلَيْهِ،

1. فَيَجْذِبُهُ إِلَى تَحَمُّلِ هَذِهِ الْمُجَاهَدَةِ
2. وَيَحْمِلُهُ عَلَى اسْتِقْبَاحِ الْجِنَايَةِ
3. وَيُسْكِتُهُ عَنِ الشَّكْوَى

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ حَيَاءٌ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنَ النَّظَرِ فِي عَلَمِ الْقُرْبِ،

1. فَيَدْعُوهُ

"اسْتَحْيُوا مِنَ اللهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاءِ."

"Have *ḥayâ'* for Allah as is His due."

[He said:] "We said:

" إِنَّا لَنَسْتَحْيِي وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ "

'We have *ḥayâ'*, and all praise is due to Allah.'"

He said:

"لَيْسَ ذَاكَ وَلَكِنَّ الاِسْتِحْيَاءَ مِنَ اللهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاءِ أَنْ تَحْفَظَ" الرَّأْسَ وَمَا وَعَى وَتَحْفَظَ الْبَطْنَ وَمَا حَوَى وَتَتَذَكَّرَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْبِلَى وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الآخِرَةَ تَرَكَ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدِ اسْتَحْيَا مِنَ اللهِ حَقَّ الْحَيَاءِ"

"Not that, but having the *ḥayâ'* for Allah which He is due is to protect the head and what it contains and the guts and what they hold, and to remember death and the trials, and whoever intends the hereafter, he leaves the adornments of the world. So whoever does that, then he has indeed fulfilled *ḥayâ'*, meaning the *ḥayâ'* which Allah is due." (at-Tirmidhi, who graded it *ghareeb*)

2. connecting him/her through the breeze of *uns* (comforting intimacy with Allah),

3. and making him/her resent mixing with the creations.[302]

إِلَى رُكُوبِ الْمَحَبَّةِ

2. وَيَرْبُطُهُ بِرُوحِ الْأُنْسِ

3. وَيُكَرِّهُ إِلَيْهِ مُلَابَسَةَ الْخَلْقِ

The third level is *ḥayâ'* that arises from attending the Divine presence; a level that is:

1. mixed with awe

2. void of *tafriqah* (dispersion)[303]

3. and with no finite end[304]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ حَيَاءٌ يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ شُهُودِ الْحَضْرَةِ، وَهِيَ الَّتِي:

1. تَشُوبُهَا هَيْبَةٌ

2. وَلَا تُقَارِنُهَا تَفْرِقَةٌ

3. وَلَا يُوقَفُ لَهَا عَلَى غَايَةٍ

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302 Except mixing that is for Allah and through Him.

303 Noticing the *farq* (variances, differences, distinctions, multiplicity) in your circumstances and Allah's wants of you, while acknowledging the unity of the Origin, Maker, Owner, and Controller, and enjoying your *jam'* (togetherness) with Him, will keep you away from *tafriqah* (dispersion) of thoughts and fragmentation of resolve.

304 When you reach Him, you reach infinity; it is bliss without end, without cessation, constantly increasing, and forever gratifying.

Station 35: Truthfulness

aṣ-Ṣidq (الصِّدْق) [305]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...And when the matter was determined, if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.} *[Muḥammad 47:21]*[306]

الصِّدْقُ اسْمٌ لِحَقِيقَةِ الشَّيْءِ بِعَيْنِهِ حُصُولًا وَوُجُودًا. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Truthfulness is a name for the reality of a particular thing/event, concerning its transpiring or existence.[307] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى صِدْقُ الْقَصْدِ، وَبِهِ يَصِحُّ الدُّخُولُ فِي هَذَا الشَّأْنِ، وَيُتَلَافَى بِهِ كُلُّ تَفْرِيطٍ، وَيُتَدَارَكُ بِهِ كُلُّ فَائِتٍ، وَيُعْمَرُ كُلُّ خَرَابٍ.

The first level is the truthfulness of intent, and it is through this that admission into this affair becomes validated, and through it any negligence may be avoided, any missed (opportunity) may be reclaimed, and any

وَعَلَامَةُ هَذَا الصَّادِقِ:

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[305] Other related meanings: honesty, genuineness, sincerity, forthrightness, candidness, and credibility.

[306] The focus here is about truthfulness with Allah, which is the most important type of truthfulness and origin of all others. Allah also demands us to be true to ourselves and others.

[307] Truthfulness is about consistency between statements and realities, words and actions, interior and exterior, claims and proofs, etc.

ruins may be rehabilitated.[308]

1. أَنْ لَا يَتَحَمَّلَ دَاعِيَةً تَدْعُو إِلَى نَقْضِ عَهْدٍ

The signs of this truthful person are:

1. he/she would not tolerate any call to breaching the covenant[309]

2. وَلَا يَصْبِرَ عَلَى صُحْبَةِ ضِدٍّ

2. he/she would not stand the company of the dissenters[310]

3. وَلَا يَقْعُدَ عَنِ الْجِدِّ بِحَالٍ

3. his/her resolve does not waver

The second level:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. to not wish longevity except for the True One[311]

1. أَنْ لَا يَتَمَنَّى الْحَيَاةَ إِلَّا لِلْحَقِّ

2. to see in him/herself nothing but the penalties of deficiency

2. وَلَا يَشْهَدَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ إِلَّا أَثَرَ النُّقْصَانِ

3. to avoid the indulgences of concessions[312]

3. وَلَا يَلْتَفِتَ إِلَى تَرْفِيهِ الرُّخَصِ

The third level is truthfulness in

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ الصِّدْقُ

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[308] Once the intent is pure and you are not lying to yourself about it, all wrong can be rectified.

[309] Not only will you not entertain these calls; you will be repulsed by them.

[310] Dissenters of the path to God will cause instantaneous aversion in you. You will smell insincerity, inconsistency, arrogance, prejudice, heedlessness, and other vices in their speech or conduct. Mixing with them will be only for the common good, for their benefit if you can help them recover from their illness, or for your worldly benefit as long as you need to be in their company.

[311] To continue to earn His pleasure.

[312] The concessions that should be avoided are those of following weak positions or dubious matters. However, the concessions prescribed by Allah are loved by Him.

فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الصِّدْقِ، فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ لَا يَسْتَقِيمُ فِي عِلْمِ أَهْلِ الْخُصُوصِ إِلَّا عَلَى حَرْفٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَهُوَ أَنْ يَتَّفِقَ رِضَا الْحَقِّ بِعَمَلِ الْعَبْدِ، أَوْ حَالِهِ، أَوْ وَقْتِهِ، وَإِيقَانِ الْعَبْدِ وَقَصْدِهِ، فَيَكُونَ الْعَبْدُ رَاضِيًا مَرْضِيًّا. فَأَعْمَالُهُ إِذْنْ مَرْضِيَّةٌ وَأَحْوَالُهُ صَادِقَةٌ وَقُصُودُهُ مُسْتَقِيمَةٌ. وَإِنْ كَانَ الْعَبْدُ كُسِيَ ثَوْبًا مُعَارًا فَأَحْسَنُ أَعْمَالِهِ ذَنْبٌ وَأَصْدَقُ أَحْوَالِهِ زُورٌ وَأَصْفَى قُصُودِهِ قُعُود.

recognizing truthfulness, for truthfulness is not actualized, according to the understanding of the elite, except in one case: when there is full congruency between the pleasure of the Lord and the actions of the servant, his/her state, moments, certitude, and intent.[313] The servant thereby becomes pleasing (to his/her Lord) and well pleased with Him. His/her actions will then be accepted, his/her states will be true, and his/her intentions will be straight. However, if the servant is dressed in a borrowed garment,[314] the best of his/her deeds will be a sin, the truest of their states will be falsehood, and the purest of their intents will be idleness.

[313] And the only one who can guide us to the pleasure of Allah is the receiver of His Revelation, His Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ.

[314] One wears a pretentious garment that is not his/hers when they speak, act, or dress like the pious, without having their hearts and intentions.

Station 36: Altruism
al-Eethâr (الإيثَار)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...and they give others preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...} *[al-Ḥashr 59:9]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ}.

Altruism is a choice to favor someone in particular [over oneself].[315] Selfishness is [tolerated] willingly, and that is praiseworthy,[316] but it may also be tolerated unwillingly. Altruism is of three levels:

الْإِيثَارُ تَخْصِيصٌ وَاخْتِيَارٌ، وَالْأَثَرَةُ تَحْسُنُ طَوْعًا وَتَصِحُّ كَرْهًا. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is to favor the creation over yourself, as long as this does not lead to sin, does not interrupt your journey, and does not waste your time. This is not attainable except through three qualities:

1. esteeming rights[317]
2. abhorring possessiveness

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى أَنْ تُؤْثِرَ الْخَلْقَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ فِيمَا لَا يَحْرِمُ عَلَيْكَ دِينًا، وَلَا يَقْطَعُ عَلَيْكَ طَرِيقًا، وَلَا يُفْسِدُ عَلَيْكَ وَقْتًا. وَلَا يُسْتَطَاعُ إِلَّا بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. بِتَعْظِيمِ الْحُقُوقِ
2. وَمَقْتِ الشُّحِّ
3. وَالرَّغْبَةِ فِي مَكَارِمِ

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315 One who is altruistic is acting deliberately out of an autonomous choice to be good, not a mere inclination.

316 For the selfish one has no control, and what they withhold from you is, in fact, withheld by the true Owner of all things and Disposer of all affairs: Allah.

317 The rights of others over him/her.

3. desire in magnanimity

The second level is favoring the pleasure of Allah over the pleasure of others, even if this results in great hardship, costs a great price, and overwhelms one's strength and body. This can be attained through three qualities:

1. the soundness of one's homecoming[318]
2. the wellness of one's Islam
3. the strength of one's resolve

The third level is one's denial of their altruism out of recognition that it is only Allah who favors [whomever He pleases]. This is so because one's claim of altruism is a [false] claim of ownership.[319] Then, one must refrain from beholding their denial of their altruism.[320] Then, one must be unconscious of their refraining.[321]

الْأَخْلَاقِ

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ إِيثَارُ رِضَا اللهِ عَلَى رِضَا غَيْرِهِ، وَإِنْ عَظُمَتْ فِيهِ الْمِحَنُ، وَثَقُلَتْ فِيهِ الْمُؤَنُ، وَضَعُفَ عَنْهُ الطَّوْلُ وَالْبَدَنُ. وَيُسْتَطَاعُ هَذَا بِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. بِطِيبِ الْعَوْدِ
2. وَحُسْنِ الْإِسْلَامِ
3. وَقُوَّةِ الصَّبْرِ

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ إِيثَارُ إِيثَارِ اللهِ، فَإِنَّ الْخَوْضَ فِي الْإِيثَارِ دَعْوَى فِي الْمِلْكِ، ثُمَّ تَرْكُ شُهُودِ رُؤْيَتِكَ إِيثَارَ اللهِ، ثُمَّ غَيْبَتُكَ عَنِ التَّرْكِ.

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318 Determination to return Home (paradise).

319 One who thinks of themselves as altruistic thinks in the first place that they own that which they give. This is a false claim of ownership, because the true Owner is only the One.

320 Because you would still be mindful of your actions (your denial of your power and influence). Such mindfulness crowds out

(or competes with) your mindfulness of Allah in your consciousness.

[321] Because you would still be mindful of your abstentions. This means that you are still conscious of your self. To the sheikh, that may still compete with your consciousness of the True One, Allah.

Station 37: (Moral) Character
al-Khalq (الخُلق)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{And indeed, you are of a great moral character.} *[al-Qalam 68:4]*

الْخُلُقُ مَا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِ الْمُتَكَلِّفُ مِنْ نَعْتِهِ. وَاجْتَمَعَتْ كَلِمَةُ النَّاطِقِينَ فِي هَذَا الْعِلْمِ أَنَّ التَّصَوُّفَ هُوَ الْخُلُقُ، وَجَمِيعُ الْكَلَامِ فِيهِ يَدُورُ عَلَى قُطْبٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَهُوَ بَذْلُ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَكَفُّ الْأَذَى . وَإِنَّمَا يُدْرَكُ إِمْكَانُ ذَلِكَ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ: فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجُودِ وَالصَّبْرِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Character is the true nature to which the pretentious one relapses. The theorists of this knowledge have agreed that *taṣawwuf* is all about moral character. All of it revolves around one axis: extending kindness and refraining from harm. This may be attained by three qualities: knowledge, benevolence, and patience.[322] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى أَنْ تَعْرِفَ مَقَامَ الْخَلْقِ وَأَنَّهُمْ بِأَقْدَارِهِمْ مَرْبُوطُونَ، وَفِي طَاقَتِهِمْ مَحْبُوسُونَ وَعَلَى الْحُكْمِ

The first level is to know the place of the creations and that they are tied to their destinies, confined within their given capacities, and bound by

[322] Knowledge guides you to what is right, just, and good. Benevolence makes you kind to all creations and generous. Patience helps you tolerate people's harm and forgive them.

[His] decree.[323] You will gain from this recognition three things:

مَوْقُوفُونَ، فَتَسْتَفِيدَ بِهَذِهِ الْمَعْرِفَةِ ثَلَاثَةَ أَشْيَاءَ:

1. the creations, even the dogs, feeling safe from you[324]

1. أَمْنَ الْخَلْقِ مِنْكَ، حَتَّى الْكَلْبِ

2. the creations' love of you

2. وَمَحَبَّةُ الْخَلْقِ إِيَّاكَ

3. the creations' salvation through you[325]

3. وَنَجَاةُ الْخَلْقِ بِكَ

The second level is perfecting your manners with the True One, and it is accomplished by knowing that:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ تَحْسِينُ خُلُقِكَ مَعَ الْحَقِّ، وَتَحْسِينُهُ مِنْكَ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ:

1. everything from you mandates your apology[326]

1. أَنَّ كُلَّ مَا يَأْتِي مِنْكَ يُوجِبُ عُذْرًا

2. everything from the True One mandates your gratefulness

2. وَأَنَّ كُلَّ مَا يَأْتِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُوجِبُ شُكْرًا

3. there is no salvation for you except through fulfilling [His covenant]

3. وَأَنْ لَا تَرَى لَهُ مِنَ الْوَفَاءِ بُدًّا

The third level is:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

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[323] Thus, you will not be harsh in judging them and you will find excuses for them. This does not mean the acceptance or normalization of sin, but showing mercy to the sinner.

[324] Because they know you do not ever intend to harm them and that you are forgiving and benevolent.

[325] Because when they love you, they will be more accepting of your preaching and guidance.

[326] Even your good deeds mandate an apology, because they are not good enough to be presented to Him. The Prophet ﷺ used to make *istighfâr* immediately after the prayers.

1. refining one's character through purification[327]

2. rising above the dispersion of refining the character[328]

3. refining the character by transcending (leaving behind) one's character[329]

1. التَّخَلّقُ بِتَصْفِيَةِ الْخُلُقِ

2. ثُمَّ الصُّعُودُ عَنْ تَفْرِقَةِ التَّخَلُّقِ

3. ثُمَّ التَّخَلُّقُ بِمُجَاوَزَةِ الْأَخْلَاقِ

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[327] Perfecting each character by eliminating all impurities, most importantly the impurities of intention.

[328] Because focusing on the refinement of the character may distract you from focusing on the Divine (exalted is He). Sometimes it is better to rechannel a certain character to be subservient to the Divine will. 'Umar rechanneled his roughness to serve the cause of God. Additionally, a journeyer may possibly waste valuable time killing all the snakes and scorpions in his way, which may delay him or interrupt his journey. The ultimate goal is to do His work, serve His cause, and please Him.

[329] This is again, according to the sheikh (may Allah be pleased with him), the ultimate station, which is being unconscious of the self and conscious only of the True One, Allah.

Station 38: Humbleness
at-Tawâḍu' (التَّواضُع)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk on the earth in humility...} *[al-Furqân 25:63]*

Humbleness is for the servant to give in to the might of the truth.[330] It is of three levels:

The first level is humbleness before the religion. It means that one will not:

1. oppose the transmitted evidence by a rational one
2. question the proofs of the religion[331]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا}.

التَّوَاضُعُ أَنْ يَتَوَاضَعَ الْعَبْدُ لِصَوْلَةِ الْحَقِّ.

وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى التَّوَاضُعُ لِلدِّينِ. وَهُوَ أَنْ:

1. لَا يُعَارِضَ بِمَعْقُولٍ مَنْقُولًا
2. وَلَا يَتَّهِمَ لِلدِّينِ دَلِيلًا

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[330] The Prophet ﷺ said:

" إِنَّ اللهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ الْكِبْرُ بَطَرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمْطُ النَّاسِ "

"Verily, Allah is beautiful, and He loves beauty. Pride is disdaining/rejecting the truth and contempt for the people." (Muslim)

[331] Rather, one will question their intellect and comprehension. The definitively established proofs of the religion will never be in conflict with reality, but one's understanding of them or of reality may be incorrect. A little knowledge of logic and philosophy may make one disbelieve, but more will likely guide them back to faith.

3. find an excuse for divergence

This will not be accomplished except by recognizing that salvation is dependent on [having] insight, and straightness comes only after [having] trust, and clarity is attainable only through the proper evidence.[332]

3. وَلَا يَرَى إِلَى الْخِلَافِ سَبِيلًا

وَلَا يَصِحُّ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِأَنْ يَرَى أَنَّ النَّجَاةَ فِي الْبَصِيرَةِ، وَالِاسْتِقَامَةَ بَعْدَ الثِّقَةِ، وَأَنَّ الْبَيِّنَةَ وَرَاءَ الْحُجَّةِ.

The second level is to:

1. accept as your brothers/sisters those whom Allah accepted as His Muslim servants[333]

2. never deny your enemy their right[334]

3. accept excuses from those who seek to be excused

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ:

1. تَرْضَى بِمَا رَضِيَ الْحَقُّ بِهِ لِنَفْسِهِ عَبْدًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أَخًا

2. وَأَنْ لَا تَرُدَّ عَلَى عَدُوِّكَ حَقًّا

3. وَأَنْ تَقْبَلَ مِنَ الْمُعْتَذِرِ مَعَاذِيرَه

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[332] So he/she needs to trust his/her Lord, rely on the insight which is a gift from Him, and seek clarity in the clear proofs of the *deen*. This will make the worshiper humbled before the evidence and the scholar reliant on the Divine assistance and the gift of insight.

[333] And if they are your brothers and sisters, you should never consider yourself superior to them. In fact, Bâyazeed al-Bisṭâmi (may Allah bestow mercy on him) said that humbleness is to consider none of the creations worse or lower than you.

[334] That is the true test of humbleness. Conceding only to those who are friends is not humbleness. Allah said:

{وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا}

{...and do not let the hatred/hostility of a people prevent you from being just...} *(al-Mâ'idah 5:8)*

The third level is to show humbleness before the True One, thus giving up:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ أَنْ تَتَّضِعَ لِلْحَقِّ، فَتَنْزِلَ عَنْ:

1. your opinions and customs while in [His] service[335]

1. رَأْيِكَ وَعَوَائِدِكَ فِي الْخِدْمَةِ

2. the thought of entitlement to [His] company[336]

2. وَرُؤْيَةِ حَقِّكَ فِي الصُّحْبَةِ

3. beholding your image while witnessing [Him][337]

3. وَعَنْ رَسْمِكَ فِي الْمُشَاهَدَةِ

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[335] Complete conformity to the Divine and dissolution of your will into His is the goal.

[336] Rather, you show gratefulness when He invites you to draw closer and lets you enjoy the comfort of intimacy (*al-uns*) with Him, but never expect it as a right.

[337] For beholding the self/ego bars one from beholding the True One alone. The light of His appearance, for those so blessed to behold Him with the eyes of their hearts, will decimate the darkness of the mortal egos.

Station 39: Pietistic Heroism
al-Futuwwah (الْفُتُوَّةِ) [338]

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[338] *Futuwwah* (lit., 'young manliness') is a synthetic concept. There is no praise or dispraise of this term in the Revelation. It was never mentioned in this verbal-noun form in the Qur'an. What was mentioned in the Revelation, admittedly in a mostly positive context, is the noun from which *'futuwwah'* is derived, which is *'fata'*, meaning a young man or its plural form. The word *'fata'* had positive connotations in pre-Islamic Arabia. It was used at times to refer to the ideal young man who demonstrates the most desirable qualities the tribal communities of Arabia expected, particularly courage, generosity, and allegiance. Sometimes, other virtues were implied and even vices as well, like extravagance, binge drinking, etc.

After Islam, the masters of proper Sunni Sufism attempted to draw on the inherent positivity in the word. They wanted to change its use to denote certain positive aspects common to youth, such as the natural ones of energy and strength and the moral ones like courage, generosity, and allegiance. Some developed it into a complete code of conduct representative of the moral and spiritual chivalry, gallantry, and magnanimity expected of the seekers.

Afterwards, it was used to refer to paramilitary organizations, professional guilds, and certain fraternities. Some of them added innovations to the concept and ritualistic practices for which they had to fabricate chains of transmission. Therefore, some scholars like Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be pleased with him) condemned those deviations, while acknowledging the good virtues and pure beginnings.

Finally, in some places like Egypt, the term *futuwwah* was used as a noun to refer to violent thugs who intimidated entire neighborhoods, although at times they acted chivalrous! What the sheikh uses the term for here is obviously the concept of pietistic heroism or chivalry expected of the seekers. Many of the concepts

Allah, the Almighty, said:

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.} *[al-Kahf 18:13]*

{إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى}.

The heart of *futuwwah* is that you do not perceive for yourself any advantage or entitlement. It is of three levels:

نُكْتَةُ الْفُتُوَّةِ أَنْ لَا تَشْهَدَ لَكَ فَضْلًا، وَلَا تَرَى لَكَ حَقًّا. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. refraining from disputation
2. ignoring the slips (of others)
3. forgetting the harm (of others)

1. تَرْكُ الْخُصُومَةِ
2. وَالتَّغَافُلُ عَنِ الزَّلَّةِ
3. وَنِسْيَانُ الْأَذِيَّةِ

The second level:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. to bring closer those who push you away
2. to show generosity to those who hurt you
3. to apologize to those who wrong you[339]

1. أَنْ تُقَرِّبَ مَنْ يُقْصِيكَ
2. وَتُكْرِمَ مَنْ يُؤْذِيكَ
3. وَتَعْتَذِرَ إِلَى مَنْ يَجْنِي عَلَيْكَ

سَمَاحَةٌ لَا كَظْمًا، وَمَوَدَّةٌ لَا مُصَابَرَةٌ.

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addressed overlap with other stations, but the angle from which they are being approached is different. The vigor of youth is the essence of this usage to describe a form of moral and spiritual vigor that is sustainable only by the strongest believers.

[339] You may have caused them to wrong you or contributed to it. If not directly, remember that the One Who made them harm you likely did that because you deserved it. In your apology to them, you

all out of clemency, not mere restraint; and out of compassion, not mere tolerance.

The third level:

1. to not make your journey contingent on proofs[340]

2. to not taint your responsiveness with the desire of compensation

3. to not observe any forms in your *shuhood* (witnessing)

Know that one who causes his enemy to seek an intercession and is not too shy to listen to his apologies has nothing to do with *futuwwah*. In the knowledge of the elite, the one who seeks the light of Truth through reasoning is not entitled to the claim of *futuwwah*.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. أَنْ لَا تَتَعَلَّقَ فِي السَّيْرِ بِدَلِيلٍ

2. وَلَا تَشُوبَ إِجَابَتَكَ بِعِوَضٍ

3. وَلَا تَقِفَ فِي شُهُودِكَ عَلَى رَسْمٍ

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ مَنْ أَحْوَجَ عَدُوَّهُ إِلَى شَفَاعَةٍ، وَلَمْ يَخْجَلْ مِنَ الْمَعْذِرَةِ إِلَيْهِ لَمْ يَشَمَّ رَائِحَةَ الْفُتُوَّةِ. وَفِي عِلْمِ الْخُصُوصِ، مَنْ طَلَبَ نُورَ الْحَقِيقَةِ عَلَى قَدَمِ الِاسْتِدْلَالِ، لَمْ يَحِلَّ لَهُ دَعْوَى الْفُتُوَّةِ أَبَدًا.

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acknowledge that your sin against Allah or someone else caused them to earn a sin against you.

[340] One who needs a proof to start the march to Him is never entitled to the claim of *futuwwah*. He is the proof for Him and everything else.

Station 40: Affability
al-Inbisâṭ (الانْبِسَاط) [341]

Allah, the Almighty, said, quoting His *kaleem*[342] (peace be upon him):

{...Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will...} *[al-A'râf 7:155]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَاكِيًا عَن كَلِيمِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

{أَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا ۖ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ}.

Inbisâṭ (being at ease) is to act naturally, avoiding the lonesomeness of excessive reverence.[343] It is to follow one's disposition.

It is of three levels:

الِانْبِسَاطُ إِرْسَالُ السَّجِيَّةِ وَالتَّحَاشِي مِنْ وَحْشَةِ الْحِشْمَةِ. وَهُوَ السَّيْرُ مَعَ الْجِبِلَّةِ.

وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَات.

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[341] *Inbisâṭ* (being at ease) could also be translated as informality or comfort. It is to not allow your reverence of Allah to hinder you from having a loving relationship with Him, which involves comfort, spontaneity, and ease. It must be remembered, however, that this station must be approached carefully to not lead the servant to rudeness. For the elite, it will never cause them to transgress their bounds with Allah.

[342] The one with whom Allah spoke directly: Moosâ (peace be upon him).

[343] When you are in your togetherness (*jam'iyah*) with Allah, do not let His reverence rob you of the pleasure of His company and the *uns* (comforting intimacy) of His nearness.

The first level is to be at ease with the creations, and that is by:

1. not isolating yourself from them, out of concern for your time or interests
2. continually extending your favors to them and accommodating them with your good manners
3. allowing them to step on you,[344]

all of this while upholding the knowledge [of the scriptures] and being observant of the meaning [of existence].[345]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى الِانْبِسَاطُ مَعَ الْخَلْقِ

وَهُوَ أَنْ

1. لَا تَعْتَزِلَهُمْ ضَنًّا عَلَى نَفْسِكَ، أَوْ شُحًّا عَلَى حَظِّكَ
2. وَتَسْتَرْسِلَ لَهُمْ فِي فَضْلِكَ، وَتَسَعَهُمْ بِخُلُقِكَ
3. وَتَدَعَهُمْ يَطَؤُونَكَ

وَالْعِلْمُ قَائِمٌ، وَشُهُودُ الْمَعْنَى دَائِمٌ.

The second level is to be at ease with the Creator, and this is by:

1. not letting fear confine you
2. not letting hope bar you[346]
3. not letting Adam or Eve stand between you and Him[347]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ الِانْبِسَاطُ مَعَ الْحَقِّ

وَهُوَ أَنْ:

1. لَا يَحْبِسَكَ خَوْفٌ
2. وَلَا يَحْجُبَكَ رَجَاءٌ
3. وَلَا يَحُولَ بَيْنَكَ

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[344] That is not to embolden the transgressors, but to be easygoing and forgo some of your rights for the greater benefit of winning over peoples' hearts and, most importantly, pleasing God.

[345] You will not allow your friendliness and affability with the people to make you cross the bounds of *Shari'ah* known through the knowledge of the scriptures, and you are not being distracted from observing the ultimate meaning of your existence: being with Allah and seeking His pleasure.

[346] Hope in the immediate reward may bar you from seeking His pleasure. It could also make you disingenuously submissive, which keeps you from being at ease with Him.

وَبَيْنَهُ آدَمُ وَلَا حَوَّاءُ

The third level is to refrain from *inbisâṭ*, enthusiastically, for the *inbisâṭ* (affability) of the servant now fades into the *basṭ* (extension of joy, abundance) of the True One, glorified is His majesty.

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ الِانْطِوَاءِ عَنْ الِانْبِسَاطِ، وَهُوَ رَحْبُ الْهِمَّةِ، لِانْطِوَاءِ انْبِسَاطِ الْعَبْدِ فِي بَسْطِ الْحَقِّ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ.

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347 This either means any man or woman, or it may mean that you should behold His immediate creation of you without mediums, allowing you to have a direct connection with Him.

SECTION V: THE FOUNDATIONS

AL-UṢOOL (الأُصُول)

The section on the foundations has ten chapters:	وأمَّا قِسْمُ الأصُولِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. intent	1. القَصْدُ
2. resolve	2. والعَزْمُ
3. willfulness	3. والإرَادَةُ
4. propriety	4. والأدَبُ
5. certainty	5. واليَقِينُ
6. comforting intimacy	6. والأُنْسُ
7. remembrance	7. والذِكْرُ
8. need	8. والفقْرُ
9. self-sufficiency	9. والغنى
10. the *murâd* (the one being sought)	10. ومقَامُ المُرَادِ

Station 41: Intent[348]
al-Qaṣd (الْقَصْدِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him—his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah...}[349] *[an-Nisā' 4:100]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِن بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللهِ}.

Qaṣd is about deciding to dedicate oneself to obedience. It is of three levels:

القَصْدُ الإِزْمَاعُ عَلَى التَّجَرُّدُ للطَّاعَةِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is intent that:

1. motivates spiritual training (disciplining)
2. rids one from reluctance[350]
3. invites one to shun the [lower] wants

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى

قَصْدٌ يَبْعَثُ عَلَى الاِرْتِيَاضِ

وَيُخَلِّصُ مِنَ التَّرَدُّدِ

وَيَدْعُو إِلَى مُجَانَبَةِ الْأَغْرَاضِ

The second level is intent that:

1. cuts all strings[351]

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ

1. قَصْدٌ لَا يَلْقَى سَبَبًا

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[348] This chapter is about making up our minds and determining our direction after awakening to the meaning of our existence.

[349] The verse refers to one who chose their direction (*qaṣd*), decided that their destination is Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and set out to reach it.

[350] Since the direction has been finally decided, there will be no hesitation or walking off the straight path.

[351] That will cause impediment or distraction for the seeker.

2. disables all barriers[352] إِلَّا قَطَعَهُ

3. facilitates all challenges 2. وَلَا حَائِلًا إِلَّا مَنَعَهُ

3. وَلَا تَحَامُلًا إِلَّا سَهَّلَهُ

The third level is: الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

1. intending surrender to the refinement of knowledge[353] 1. قَصْدُ الِاسْتِسْلَامِ لِتَهْذِيبِ الْعِلْمِ

2. responding to the intent of the law[354] 2. وَقَصْدُ إِجَابَةِ دَاعِي الْحُكْمِ

3. daring the ocean of self-annihilation (*fanâ'*) 3. وَقَصْدُ اقْتِحَامِ بَحْرِ الْفَنَاءِ

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[352] Between us and our ultimate pursuit.

[353] To allow knowledge of the scriptures to reshape us and refine our characters without any reservations and with complete submissiveness.

[354] By obedience and reflection on their wisdom, which will further enhance our enthusiastic acceptance of them and commitment to their fulfillment with *iḥsân*.

Station 42: Resolve
al-'Azm (الْعَزْم)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And when you have resolved, then rely upon Allah...} *[Âli 'Imrân 3:159]*

بِقَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ}.

Resolve is the actualization of the intent (*qaṣd*), willingly or unwillingly.[355] It is of three levels:

الْعَزْمُ هُوَ تَحْقِيقُ الْقَصْدِ طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا؛ وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ

The first level is the rebellion of the *ḥâl* (spiritual state) against (the limitations of) knowledge;[356] and this is for:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى إِبَاءُ الْحَالِ عَلَى الْعِلْمِ

1. لِشَيْمِ بَرْقِ الْكَشْفِ
2. وَاسْتِدَامَةِ نُورِ

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[355] When the Muslim army encountered the Romans and their allies in Mu'tah, 'Abdullâh ibn Rawâḥah motivated himself by the following lines of poetry:

أَقْسَمْتُ يَا نَفْسُ لَتَنْزِلِنَّهْ لَتَنْزِلِنَّ أَوْ لَتُكْرَهِنَّهْ -- إِنْ أَجْلَبَ النَّاسُ وَشَدُّوا الرَّنَّهْ -- مَالِي أَرَاكِ تَكْرَهِينَ الْجَنَّهْ

I swear upon you, O *nafs* (self), that you shall enter or shall be forced to do so

The people have gathered, and the cries have risen

What is the matter with you? I see that you dislike paradise!

[356] That is, not to ignore the *Shari'ah* and knowledge of the scriptures. The sheikh is advising us to aspire for more than the requirements of knowledge and not to injudiciously follow concessions and shortcuts or fall into dry technicality or overconfidence in one's knowledge. There are also cases where knowledge may not be sufficient to guide someone concerning a

1. beholding the flashes of disclosure[357]

2. enjoying the light of comforting intimacy (*uns*) indefinitely[358]

3. pursuing the annihilation of passions (*hawâ*)

الْأُنْسِ

3. وَالْإِجَابَةِ لِإِمَاتَةِ الْهَوَى

The second level:

1. being consumed in the foretastes of *mushâhadah* (the beholding [of Allah])[359]

2. the illumination of the road[360]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ

1. الِاسْتِغْرَاقُ فِي لَوَائِحِ الْمُشَاهَدَةِ

2. وَاسْتِنَارَةُ ضِيَاءِ الطَّرِيقِ

---

particular incident. This is where one may need to count on inspiration (*ilhâm*) and intuitive perception (*dhawq*), as Imam Ibn Taymiyyah stated, to find guidance. This is not *dhawq* and *ilhâm* to counter knowledge, but to complement it.

[357] When He discloses to you the way to the various stations, the flaws of your *nafs*, and most importantly, the meanings of His names and attributes.

[358] Because abiding by the technicalities of the knowledge of the intellect will not earn you that comforting intimacy in the presence of your Lord. You will be working hard like a servant, while His friends are welcomed into His presence. This is the condition of those whose hearts are rigid and dry. Their deeds are void of function and purpose. Their prayers do not keep them from lewdness and evil. They abandon food and drink when they fast, but their hearts do not abandon arrogance and rancor.

[359] Which bars you from beholding all others (*as-siwâ* السِّوَى).

[360] When you get close enough to your destination, and the lights of the city illuminate your path to it, you see it leading clearly to it while before, you were dependent on the signposts.

3. the recruitment of all energies of uprightness[361]

The third level:

1. recognizing the flaws of *'azm* (resolve)[362]

2. then resolving to get rid of resolve[363]

3. then getting rid of the aftereffect of the disavowal of resolve,[364]

for nothing resolve can earn its people is better than showing them its flaws.

3. وَاسْتِجْمَاعُ قُوَى الِاسْتِقَامَةِ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

1. مَعْرِفَةُ عِلَّةِ الْعَزْمِ

2. ثم الْعَزْمُ عَلَى التَّخَلُّصِ مِنَ الْعَزْمِ

3. ثُمَّ الْخَلَاصُ مِنْ تَكَالِيفِ تَرْكِ الْعَزْمِ

فَإِنَّ الْعَزَائِمَ لَمْ تُوَرِّثْ أَرْبَابَهَا مِيرَاثًا أَكْرَمَ مِنْ وُقُوفِهِمْ عَلَى عِلَلِ الْعَزَائِمِ.

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[361] For now, he/she would have seen the finish line (the gates of the city), so he/she would have all the energy inside him/her recruited to sprint and get to it.

[362] That is, ascribing their resolve to themselves.

[363] By disavowing the attribution of resolve to oneself and seeing it as a gift from Allah.

[364] Continuing to see that you abandoned or disavowed resolve means that you still think you had, at one point, some legitimate claim to it.

Station 43: Willfulness
al-Irâdah (الإِرَادَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Say: Each works according to his (own) manner...} *[al-Isrâ' 17:84]*

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى:

{قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِه}.

Willfulness is one of the principal rules of this knowledge and its foundational structures.[365] It concerns the willful response to the call of the Truth.[366]

It is of three levels:

The first level is about:

1. deserting habits by adherence to knowledge[367]

2. clinging to the breaths of the travelers with devotion of intent[368]

الإِرَادَةُ مِنْ قَوَانِينِ هَذَا الْعِلْمِ وَجَوَامِعِ أَبْنِيَتِهِ. وَهِيَ الإِجَابَةُ لِدَوَاعِي الْحَقِيقَةِ طَوْعًا.

وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. ذَهَابٌ عَنِ الْعَادَاتِ بِصُحْبَةِ الْعِلْمِ

2. وَالتَّعَلُّقُ بِأَنْفَاسِ السَّالِكِينَ، مَعَ صِدْقِ

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[365] Willfulness is the principal action of the heart. Therefore, it has a great place in the sciences of Sufism, which focus on the heart and its dispositions and actions.

[366] This is about the genuine disposition of the heart. Unlike resolve, where one may compel themselves to behave a certain way, this is about the voluntary desire for the Creator.

[367] You desert your own personal and societal preferences and biases and abide by the requirements of the Revelation as soon as you learn them.

3. barring all distractions from the brothers/sisters and homelands

الْقَصْدِ
3. وَخَلْعُ كُلِّ شَاغِلٍ مِنَ الْإِخْوَانِ وَمُشَتِّتٌ مِنَ الْأَوْطَانِ

The second level is accomplished by:

1. the company of the *ḥâl* (spiritual state)[369]
2. rejuvenation through *uns* (comforting intimacy) [with God]
3. marching between (the states of) contraction and expansion[370]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ تُقْطَعُ:
1. بِصُحْبَةِ الْحَالِ
2. وَتَرْوِيحِ الْأُنْسِ
3. وَالسَّيْرِ بَيْنَ الْقَبْضِ وَالْبَسْطِ

The third level is a stupor with

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ ذُهُولٌ

---

[368] Keeping the company of the travelers on the path to God while ensuring that your heart is directed towards the same destination.

[369] Whatever spiritual imports Allah grants you, do not waste them.

[370] Those two states of *inbisâṭ* (ease, comfort, affability) and *inqibâḍ* (unease, strain, reservation) result from the alternation of hope and fear, proximity and distance, or could be merely caused by Allah to perfect His test, as Ibn 'Aṭâ' (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "He expanded you in order to not keep you in contraction; He contracted you in order to not keep you in expansion; and He took you out of both so that you will not belong to anything apart from Him." A true servant will continue the march between these states without becoming hopeless in the state of contraction or exultant in the state of expansion. Allah said:

{لِّكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ}

{In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...} *(al-Ḥadeed 57:23)*

adherence to uprightness and attentiveness to the refinement of character.[371]

مَعَ صُحْبَةِ الاِسْتِقَامَةِ وَمُلَازَمَةِ الرِّعَايَةِ عَلَى تَهْذِيبِ الْأَدَبِ.

[371] This is a stupor that will cause you to be distracted from this world, but not from your Lord. It is a stupor that will not cause you to deviate from propriety and uprightness or fail to observe proper etiquette with the creatures and their Creator.

Station 44: Propriety
al-Adab (الأدَبِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{... and those who observe the limits [set by] Allah...} *[at-Tawbah 9:112]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللهِ}.

Proper etiquette[372] is about observing the bounds between excessiveness and negligence by recognizing the harm of transgression.[373] It is of three levels:[374]

الْأَدَبُ حِفْظُ الْحَدِّ بَيْنَ الْغُلُوِّ وَالْجَفَاءِ بِمَعْرِفَةِ ضَرَرِ الْعُدْوَانِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ

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[372] *Adab* may also be translated as good manners, courtesy, decency, appropriateness, or refinement. The plural is *âdâb*, which would usually be translated as proper etiquette.

[373] Since this is a subtler concept and not always regulated by definitive proofs, it is essential here to strike the right balance in one's conduct with Allah, His Messenger ﷺ, and His creations.

[374] The focus here is on propriety with Allah. The masters of *sulook* (behavior) also talk about propriety with His Messenger ﷺ and His creations. Observing proper etiquette with Allah starts with the fulfillment of the obligations, then the *sunan* of the interior and exterior. Some *âdâb* may not be supported by definitive proof, but rather through inferences and proper intuition. They can sometimes be subjective. Unless required by the Revelation, there should be no enforcement or condemnation concerning them. One may proceed with the acquisition and practice of more *âdâb* gently, and prioritize

The first level:

1. preventing fear from turning into despair
2. restraining hope from transgressing into security (indifference)
3. controlling joy lest it becomes audaciousness

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. مَنْعُ الْخَوْفِ أَنْ لَا يَتَعَدَّى إِلَى الْيَأْسِ
2. وَحَبْسُ الرَّجَاءِ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ إِلَى الْأَمْنِ
3. وَضَبْطُ السُّرُورِ أَنْ يُضَاهِيَ الْجُرْأَةَ

The second level:

1. departing from fear to the arena of contraction
2. rising from hope to the arena of expansion
3. ascending from joy to the arena of *mushâhadah* (beholding the Divine)[375]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. الْخُرُوجُ عَنِ الْخَوْفِ إِلَى مَيْدَانِ الْقَبْضِ
2. وَالصُّعُودُ عَنِ الرَّجَاءِ إِلَى مَيْدَانِ الْبَسْطِ
3. وَالتَّرَقِّي مِنَ السُّرُورِ إِلَى مَيْدَانِ الْمُشَاهَدَةِ

The third level:

1. recognition of *adab*[376]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. مَعْرِفَةُ الْأَدَبِ

---

those that came from the Prophet ﷺ, then his Companions, then the followers, and so on. One should stop if certain practices become overwhelming, slow their progress, dry out their relationship with Allah, or hold them from nearness to Him.

[375] In this level, one ascends from the forms to their realities. The reality of our fear is Allah's contraction (*qabḍ*) of us, and that of hope is His expansion (*basṭ*) of us. The joy of obedience is now eclipsed by the awe and wonder of beholding the Divine.

[376] One reaches perfection of *adab* and recognizes its true essence and conditions and looks at its stations from above to complete them with *iḥsân*.

2. banishment of *adab* through the *ta'deeb* (refinement) by the True One[377]

3. ridding oneself from the burdens of *adab*[378]

2. ثُمَّ الْفَنَاءُ عَنِ التَّأَدُّبِ بِتَأْدِيبِ الْحَقِّ

3. ثُمَّ الْخَلَاصُ مِنْ شُهُودِ أَعْبَاءِ الْأَدَبِ

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[377] One now does not attribute anything to themselves and does not see his/her refinement of themselves, but Allah's refinement of them.

[378] This is when the self is dissolved through *fanâ'*.

Station 45: Certainty
al-Yaqeen (اليَقِين)

Allah, the Almighty said:

{And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith].} *[adh-Dhâriyât 51:20]*

Certainty is the transporter of the traveler on this path. It is the ending of the rankings of the common people and it was said to be the first step for the elite.[379] It is of three levels:

The first level is the certainty of knowledge *('ilm ul-yaqeen)*[380] and this is:

1. accepting what is made obvious by the True One[381]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ}.

الْيَقِينُ مَرْكَبُ الْآخِذِ فِي هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ. وَهُوَ غَايَةُ دَرَجَاتِ الْعَامَّةِ، وَقِيلَ أَوَّلُ خُطْوَةٍ لِلْخَاصَّةِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: عِلْمُ الْيَقِينِ. وَهُوَ:

1. قَبُولُ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ

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[379] Because all their stations are dependent on the establishment of certainty. However, there is always more certainty to aspire to. It was the certainty of Abu Bakr that set him apart from the rest. His certainty would not, however, compare at all to that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Ibrâheem (peace be upon him) asked for more certainty when he requested that Allah show him the resurrection of the dead. Moosâ (peace be upon him) did this when he asked Allah to allow him to see Him.

[380] Often translated as the knowledge of certainty. I chose 'certainty of knowledge' because certainty is the subject matter being described. It means the certainty that is based on certain knowledge.

[381] All the truth conveyed to us through the messengers or shown to us in the universe.

2. accepting what is hidden by the True One[382]

2. وَقَبُولُ مَا غَابَ لِلْحَقِّ

3. accepting all that is established about the True One[383]

3. وَالْوُقُوفُ عَلَى مَا قَامَ بِالْحَقِّ

The certainty of sight *('ayn ul-yaqeen)*, and this is when:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: عَيْنُ الْيَقِينِ. وَهُوَ:

1. experiencing (the Divine) replaces the need for evidence[384]

1. الْمُغْنِي بِالِاسْتِدْرَاكِ عَنْ الِاسْتِدْلَالِ

2. witnessing takes the place of hearing[385]

2. وَعَنِ الْخَبَرِ بِالْعِيَانِ

3. *shuhood* (beholding the Divine) pierces the veil of knowledge[386]

3. وَخَرْقُ الشُّهُودِ حِجَابَ الْعِلْمِ

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[382] The knowledge of the unseen, about which we believe what we were told through the Revelation and defer that which we cannot encompass to Allah. For example, we believe in the punishment of the grave, but we defer the actual nature of it to the knowledge of Allah.

[383] Of his attributes and actions without *taḥreef* (distortion), nor *ta 'ṭeel* (denial), nor *tamtheel* (likening the Divine to anything), nor *tashbeeh* (positing any resemblance). As the righteous predecessors would say, "Let them (the mentioning of Allah's attributes in the Revelation) pass as they came," meaning without denying them or discussing the 'how' (their true nature).

[384] Experiential faith confirms belief beyond the realm of mere intellectual conviction. At this stage, the traveler is not in need of proofs. It must be said that more proofs add to one's certainty and more *furqân* (power to discern the truth from falsehood) gives immunity against falsehood.

[385] The travelers now see what was described to them.

The certainty of reality *(ḥaqq ul-yaqeen)*[387] and this is:

1. the shining of the light of disclosure
2. riddance from the burden of certainty[388]
3. dissolution into the certain Truth[389]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ. وَهُوَ:

1. إِسْفَارُ صُبْحِ الْكَشْفِ
2. ثُمَّ الْخَلَاصُ مِنْ كُلْفَةِ الْيَقِينِ
3. ثُمَّ الْفَنَاءُ فِي حَقِّ الْيَقِينِ

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[386] Transcending the limitations of human knowledge through beholding with the eyes of one's heart the Divine reality by Divine assistance.

[387] An example of the different layers is our belief in paradise. It is based on our acceptance of the message of the Prophet ﷺ, and this is certainty based on certain knowledge, although we still vary within this layer. The Prophet ﷺ saw paradise in *al-isrâ'* (ascent to the heavens), so his certainty is that of eyesight. When we enter paradise—and may Allah allow us to—then our certainty will be based on reality.

While this phase belongs in this world to the greatest of Allah's messengers, our share of it is the heart's experience of the truths and fruits of faith that we were told about by the Messenger ﷺ.

[388] The burdens that led to this certainty are replaced by powers, whereby one is carried by Divine assistance to heights they would never be able to rise to on their own.

[389] Dissolution into the Divine. See the notes about *fanâ'* in previous chapters.

Station 46: Comforting Intimacy
al-Uns (الأُنس)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me—indeed I am near...} *[al-Baqarah 2:186]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ}.

Uns refers to the spirit of nearness.[390] It is of three levels:

الأُنسُ عِبارَةٌ عن رُوحِ الْقُرْبِ وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ

The first level is *uns* with the signposts,[391] and this is about:

1. finding sweetness in *dhikr*[392]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الْأُنْسُ بِالشَّوَاهِدِ، وَهُوَ:

1. اسْتِحْلَاءُ الذِّكْرِ

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[390] *Uns* is a spiritual state in which nearness to Allah results in a sense of comfort and sweetness that permeates the heart, leaving no room for loneliness or estrangement. Reflecting on His majesty and (particularly) His beauty and committing to a life of devotion and virtue leads to this state.

Linguistically, *'uns'* is a verbal noun from the past tense *'anasa'*, which means 'found comfort in the company of.' It was said that *'insân'* comes from the same root *'anasa'* because he is a social being or *'nasiya'*, which means 'forgot' because Adam forgot, and his descendants are forgetful.

[391] The proofs, signs, witnesses, and testimonials God places in our way. They could be His spoken signs in the Qur'an or the created ones in the universe, or even the states He allows the heart of the seeker to experience, as well as the soul's realizations of the fruits of faith and obedience. All will strengthen the faith of the seeker and guide the course of the traveler.

2. nourishment through hearing[393]
3. recognizing the signs[394]

2. وَالتَّغَذِّي بِالسَّمَاعِ
3. وَالْوُقُوفُ عَلَى الْإِشَارَاتِ

The second level is *uns* with the light of disclosure.

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ الْأُنْسُ بِنُورِ الْكَشْفِ

This is a type of *uns* that transcends the previous one. It is infused with the intensity of passion and struck by the waves of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation).

وَهُوَ أُنْسٌ شَاخِصٌ عَنِ الْأُنْسِ الْأَوَّلِ، تَشُوبُهُ صَوْلَةُ الْهَيَمَانِ، وَيَضْرِبُهُ مَوْجُ الْفَنَاءِ.

It is the *uns* that overwhelmed some people's intellects, and robbed others of

وَهُوَ الَّذِي غَلَبَ قَوْمًا عَلَى عُقُولِهِمْ وَسَلَبَ قَوْمًا طَاقَةَ الِاصْطِبَارِ، وَحَلَّ

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[392] You cannot find comfort in the company of someone without spending time with them.

[393] The *nafs* feeding off the transmitted knowledge of the Revelation and hearing only Allah in all sounds and instances, thereby becoming *rabbâniyah* (godly).

[394] A heedful heart will guide the sight, hearing, and all the senses to penetrating the world of particulars and images and realizing the realities and meanings behind them all. A heedful heart will not stop only at the apparent implications of words, but—without disregarding the apparent—retrieves from the inferred troves of wisdom that are indiscernible by others. There must be congruency, however, not contradiction, between the apparent and the inferred meanings. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him) gives examples in *Madârij* about some of those subtle signs. For example, he mentions that the requirement of the purity of body and garment in the prayer points to the other requirement of cleansing the heart in order to realize its full reward and benefit. Likewise, if one must face the *qiblah* with their body, their hearts, *a priori*, must not be turned away from the One they invoke.

their resilience, and removed from them the restraints of knowledge. Concerning this, the following *du'â'* was reported (from the Prophet ﷺ): "...I ask for *shawq* (intense longing) to meet You in a manner that does not entail harmful hardship or misguiding trials..."[395]

عَنْهُمْ قُيُودَ الْعِلْمِ. وَفِي هَذَا وَرَدَ الْخَبَرُ بِهَذَا الدُّعَاءِ: "أَسْأَلُكَ شَوْقًا إِلَى لِقَائِكَ مِنْ غَيْرِ ضَرَّاءَ مُضِرَّةٍ وَلَا فِتْنَةٍ مُضِلَّةٍ."

The third level is the *uns* of fading out in the *shuhood* (beholding/attendance) of the Divine presence.

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: أُنْسُ اضْمِحْلَالٍ فِي شُهُودِ الْحَضْرَةِ

1. Nothing can express its essence
2. delineate its definition
3. or recognize its nature[396]

1. لَا يُعَبِّرُ عَنْ عَيْنِهِ
2. وَلَا يُشَارُ إِلَى حَدِّهِ
3. وَلَا يُوقَفُ عَلَى كُنْهِهِ

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[395] The sheikh is describing a very vibrant spiritual state between the first and last levels of *uns*. In this phase, the spiritual imports and experiences may overwhelm some with weaker intellects and cause them spiritual intoxication or at least failure to persevere through those spiritual imports *(waridât)*. They may become audacious with their Lord. They may utter statements of apparent disbelief. They may not abide by the restraints of knowledge. The sheikh mentioned this to warn the seekers against those perils on the path. Certainly, the greatest of the seekers—like al-Karkhi, al-Junayd, and their likes—passed through these phases without fluttering due to the strength of their intellects, the soundness of their knowledge, and most importantly, the *tawfeeq* of their Lord.

[396] As usual, the sheikh makes *fanâ'* (self-annihilation) the ultimate level in every station. (Please see the earlier discussion on *fanâ'* and *baqâ'*.)

Station 47: Remembrance
adh-Dhikr (الذِّكْر)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And remember your Lord when you forget...}, *[al-Kahf 18:24]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ}.

which means when you forget others and (then) forget yourself in your remembrance, and then you forget your remembering during His remembrance, and then you forget in (beholding) His remembrance of you any other remembrance.[397]

يَعْنِي إِذَا نَسِيتَ غَيْرَهُ وَنَسِيتَ نَفْسَكَ فِي ذِكْرِكَ ثُمَّ نَسِيتَ ذِكْرَكَ فِي ذِكْرِهِ ثُمَّ نَسِيتَ فِي ذِكْرِ الْحَقِّ إِيَّاكَ كُلَّ ذِكْرٍ.

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[397] This could be of the *ishârât* (inferences) of the verse, not the direct meaning, which had to do with the Prophet ﷺ forgetting to say *in shâ' Allâh* (God willing) when the Quraysh asked him about the soul and he promised to give them an answer. What the sheikh means here is that when one remembers Allah, they should not allow any distractions to bar them from complete *shuhood*, including their own self-awareness. Then, they will not observe their own act of remembrance in favor of beholding their Lord, and then their beholding of His remembrance of them will bar them from beholding anything else. This is, again, consistent with the sheikh's favoring of the station of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation) over all others. (Please see our previous discussion of this station.) The station of *baqâ'* (subsistence) by Allah, with Allah, for Allah, is superior, safer, more real, truer, and consistent with the way of the first generation. However, the suppression of the ego that is

Dhikr here is about riddance from heedlessness and forgetfulness. It is of three levels:

وَالذِّكْرُ هُوَ التَّخَلُّصُ مِنَ الْغَفْلَةِ وَالنِّسْيَانِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the manifest *dhikr*, including:

1. praise
2. invocation
3. caring[398]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى الذِّكْرُ الظَّاهِرُ مِنْ ثَنَاءٍ أَوْ دُعَاءٍ أَوْ رِعَاءٍ.

The second level is the hidden *dhikr*, and this is about:

1. riddance from lassitude
2. subsistence in *shuhood* (beholding the Divine)
3. adherence to intimate dialogue[399]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ الذِّكْرُ الْخَفِيُّ وَهُوَ الْخَلَاصُ مِنَ الْفُتُورِ وَالْبَقَاءُ مَعَ الشُّهُودِ وَلُزُومُ الْمُسَامَرَةِ.

The third level is the true remembrance, and this is:

1. beholding the True One's remembrance of you
2. ridding yourself from beholding

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ الذِّكْرُ الْحَقِيقِيُّ وَهُوَ شُهُودُ ذِكْرِ الْحَقِّ إِيَّاكَ ، وَالتَّخَلُّصُ مِنْ شُهُودِ ذِكْرِكَ ، وَمَعْرِفَةُ افْتِرَاءِ الذَّاكِرِ فِي

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emphasized in the station of *fanâ'*, not its annihilation, is a prerequisite of the station of *baqâ'*.

[398] The manifest remembrance here, as Ibn al-Qayyim points out in *Madârij*, is that done with the tongue (while the heart is attentive). Praising Allah, invoking His assistance, and observing his rights and the proper etiquettes in dealing with Him (caring) is how you achieve this level.

[399] Now the heart is in consistent remembrance, and even while among crowds of people and events, it never ceases to be with God and never ceases to converse with Him.

your remembrance بَقَائِهِ مَعَ الذِّكْرِ.

3. recognizing the falsehood of the one who remembers (his/her Lord) but subsists in his/her own remembering[400]

[400] Again, the third level is about *fanâ'* (self-annihilation). The sheikh's concern here is that if one is still aware of their own act of remembering, their ego has not completely dissolved. There are some valid meanings in the station of *fanâ'*, as discussed before. After all, we were nothing. Had it not been for Him, we would not have existed; and had it not been for His will and His creation of our remembrance, we would not have remembered Him. This is why when Imam Ibn al-Qayyim asked Imam Ibn Taymiyyah about an explanation for how our remembrance of Allah makes Him pleased, and how a finite creature with a distinct beginning could influence the infinite Creator—eternal without beginning or end—he clarified that Allah is the One who willed that our remembrance please Him, and it is He who created us, and created our remembrance of Him, so it all goes back to Him. Therefore, *al-muḥdath* (temporal creation) is not influencing *al-qadeem* (the Eternal).

Station 48: Poverty
al-Faqr (الْفَقْرِ)

Allah, the Almighty said:

{O mankind, you are those in need of Allah...} *[Fâṭir 35:15]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ}.

Faqr is a word for the renunciation of the perception of ownership.[401] It is of three levels:

الْفَقْرُ اسْمٌ لِلْبَرَاءَةِ مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ الْمَلَكَةِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ

The first level is the poverty of the ascetics, and it involves:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: فَقْرُ الزُّهَّادِ. وَهُوَ:

1. washing one's hands of the *dunyâ*, neither keeping it nor seeking it[402]

1. نَفْضُ الْيَدِينِ مِنْ الدُّنْيَا ضَبْطًا أَوْ طَلَبًا

2. وَإِسْكَاتُ اللِّسَانِ عَنْهَا

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[401] One must have full recognition that their ownership is contingent and transient, and that even their own soul and actions are the property of Allah. *Faqr* here does not refer to lack of money, but rather the feeling of extreme need for Allah and dependence on Him for all forms of subsistence.

[402] The actualization of this *zuhd* is by avoiding greed and hoarding. 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the greatest *zâhids* in history, yet he was industrious and accomplished as well. Half of the ten Companions who received the glad tidings of paradise (named in a *ḥadeeth*) were extremely wealthy. During the time of the Prophet ﷺ, rich people were not given an inferiority complex, nor were they made to feel filthy. Miserliness, greed, extravagance, boastfulness, and hoarding were condemned: not wealth in itself.

2. silencing one's tongue concerning it, neither praising it nor disparaging it[403]

3. staying safe from it, neither craving it nor deserting it[404]

This is the poverty about whose virtue they [the masters of the path]

مَدْحًا أَوْ ذَمًّا

3. وَالسَّلَامَةُ مِنْهَا طَلَبًا أَوْ تَرْكًا

وَهَذَا هُوَ الْفَقْرُ الَّذِي تَكَلَّمُوا فِي شَرَفِهِ

The scholars disagreed about whether the rich who are grateful are better or the poor who are patient. Ibn Taymiyyah was asked this question by Ibn al-Qayyim and his reply was, "The most pious." Yaḥyâ ibn Mu'âdh said that wealth and poverty will not be put on the scale in the hereafter, but only patience and gratitude. People have different circumstances and potential. For some, wealth *(ghinâ)* accompanied by *shukr* (gratefulness) is better than poverty *(faqr)* accompanied by *ṣabr* (patience); the opposite is true for others. For one like Imam Aḥmad—who did not want to waste his valuable time earning money for more than his basic needs, did not want to accept favors from anyone, and knew that he could handle poverty gracefully and that such a lifestyle would help him actualize his potential—poverty was superior for him. Meanwhile, Ibn al-Mubârak and Ibn al-Musayib were rich, and their wealth enabled them to dedicate their time to learning, teaching, and spending their money in Allah's cause. They were still *faqeer* to Allah, however, not claiming ownership to anything in His kingdom and completely dependent on Him for all their needs.

[403] If it were truly insignificant to you, you would not have wasted time dispraising it; you would not have been occupied with it in the first place.

[404] When you miss it, do not grieve over it, and when you have it, use it in His cause. Do not make the station of *faqr* the goal of your heart. The pleasure of Allah should be the ultimate objective you are after in all states and circumstances.

spoke.

The second level is the constant consideration of the antecedence (of the Lord) by beholding (Divine) grace. This:

1. rids one of seeing their deeds[405]

2. disrupts the beholding of the *aḥwâl* (spiritual states)

3. purifies one from the filth of observing the *maqâmât* (spiritual stations)[406]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ : الرُّجُوعُ إِلَى السَّبْقِ بِمُطَالَعَةِ الْفَضْلِ. وَهُوَ:

1. يُورِثُ الْخَلَاصَ مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ الْأَعْمَالِ

2. وَيَقْطَعُ شُهُودَ الْأَحْوَالِ

3. وَيُمَحِّصُ مِنْ أَدْنَاسِ مُطَالَعَةِ الْمَقَامَاتِ

The third level:

1. certainty of destituteness[407]

2. surrender to the estranging realization of oneness[408]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ :

1. صِحَّةُ الِاضْطِرَارُ

2. وَالْوُقُوعُ فِي يَدِ التَّقَطُّعِ الْوحدَانِيِّ

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[405] When you recognize that your very deeds are His creations, and so is your soul. All are His favors.

[406] The difference between *ḥâl* and *maqâm* may be that the first is more transient or is a gift from Allah without active pursuit on the part of the servant, unlike the *maqâm*, which may mean a more stable state of being or one that was granted by God after actively being pursued by the seeker. Recognizing Allah's antecedence will not make you disavow your ownership of material objects or your deeds alone, but any entitlement to anything, including the spiritual states that you experience.

[407] One's lack of any means of subsistence without the grace of their Lord.

3. permanent sequestration in the vast, barren plains of abstraction[409]

3. والِاحْتِبَاسُ فِي بَيْدَاءِ قَيْدِ التَّجْرِيدِ

This is the poverty of the Sufis.

وَ هَذَا فَقْرُ الصُّوفِيَّةِ

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[408] Allowing oneself to be cut off from the world of finites and images and drawn towards the One, the Real, the First and Final Cause, the Eternal without beginning or end.

[409] Beholding the First *('azza wa jal)*, separate from all the *ḥawâdith* (temporally originating events). It is barren because all *as-siwâ* (the other) will be left behind and vanish from one's perception. It is vast because it is the ultimate liberation from the restraints of *shuhood as-siwâ* (observing the other), which refers to distraction by beholding the multiplicity of created things and phenomena in this universe.

Station 49: (Inner) Richness[410]
al-Ghinâ (الْغِنَى)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{And He found you poor and made you rich.}[411] *[aḍ-Ḍuḥâ 93:8]* {وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى}.

Ghinâ (richness) refers to complete ownership.[412] It is of three levels: الْغِنَى اسْمٌ لِلْمِلْكِ التَّامِّ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the richness of the heart, and it involves: الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى غِنَى الْقَلْبِ، وَهُوَ:

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[410] *Ghinâ* literally means richness/affluence, which is freedom from needs and wants. To some, it is actualized by possessing desirables; to others, it is actualized by not having those needs to begin with. To the seekers, it means freedom from worldly wants/needs.

[411] This refers to both forms of richness: the material one and the spiritual one. While the Prophet ﷺ lived a life of abstemiousness, he was free of need of anyone other than his Lord. He used to invoke Allah by saying:

"اقْضِ عَنَّا الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنَا مِنَ الْفَقْرِ."

"Remove the burden of debt from us and relieve us from poverty/want." (Muslim)

[412] The ownership of the creations is temporal and contingent. Thus, in truth, no one is self-sufficient except Allah. Our *ghinâ* (inner richness) is by Him. Richness that is attributed to the traveler here is richness by Allah. He (exalted is He) said:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ}

{O mankind, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.} *(Fâṭir 35:15)*

1. freedom from (reliance on) the causes[413]

1. سَلَامَتُهُ مِنَ السَّبَبِ

2. being at peace with the decrees[414]

2. وَمُسَالَمَتُهُ لِلْحُكْمِ

3. riddance from antagonism[415]

3. وَخَلَاصُهُ مِنَ الْخُصُومَةِ

The second level is the richness of the *nafs*,[416] and it concerns:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ غِنَى النَّفْسِ، وَهُوَ:

1. its consistent pursuit of the final goal [Allah]

1. اسْتِقَامَتُهَا عَلَى الْمَرْغُوبِ

2. its clearance of abominations[417]

2. وَسَلَامَتُهَا مِنَ الْمَسْخُوطِ

3. its clearance of ostentation

3. وَبَرَاءَتُهَا مِنَ الْمُرَاءَاةِ

The third level is sufficiency by the

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ الْغِنَى

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[413] While one must engage them in accordance with the God-ordained *nawâmees* (universal law/natural order), their reliance is entirely on the Causer.

[414] The commands and prohibitions must be accepted wholeheartedly. The universal decrees must also be received with patience and gratitude. Those that are undesirable should be resisted until they occur. Once they do, then they must be accepted with patience while their effects are being prudently mitigated.

[415] One who has no need for the creations will not be antagonistic because of greed or excessive competition. However, they will oppose and resist them for the good cause of Divine justice.

[416] While the actions of the heart are greater, Ibn al-Qayyim points out in *Madârij* that al-Harawi mentions the *nafs* at this level because it is the most rebellious of the heart's subordinates; once it is fully tamed, the road is paved for ascendance to the third level.

[417] Lowly pursuits.

True One,[418] and it is of three levels:

1. the first level is considering His remembrance of you
2. the second is observing His First-ness (antecedence)
3. The third is the ultimate success of finding Him[419]

بِالْحَقِّ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ مَرَاتِبَ:

1. الْمَرْتَبَةُ الْأُولَى شُهُودُ ذِكْرِهِ إِيَّاكَ
2. وَالثَّانِيَةُ دَوَامُ مُطَالَعَةِ أَوَّلِيَّتِهِ
3. وَالثَّالِثَةُ الْفَوْزُ بِوُجُودِهِ

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[418] Allah said:

{أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ}

{Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?...} *(az-Zumar 39:36)*

[419] Beholding Him with the 'eyes of the heart' in this *dunyâ* and those of the head in the hereafter.

Station 50: The Sought[420]
al-Murâd (الْمُرَاد)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُلْقَى إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{And you were not expecting that the Book would be conveyed to you...} *[al-Qaṣaṣ 28:86]*

أَكْثَرُ الْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ فِي هَذَا الْعِلْمِ جَعَلُوا الْمُرِيدَ وَالْمُرَادَ اثْنَيْنِ وَجَعَلُوا مَقَامَ الْمُرَادِ فَوْقَ مَقَامِ الْمُرِيدِ وَإِنَّمَا أَشَارُوا بِاسْمِ الْمُرَادِ إِلَى الصِّنْفَيْنِ الَّذِينَ وَرَدَ فِيهِمُ الْخَبَرُ. وَلِلْمُرَادِ ثَلَاثُ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Most of those who spoke about this discipline of knowledge made the *mureed* (seeker) and *murâd* (sought) two different things and considered the station of the *murâd* higher than that of the *mureed*. They used the term *'al-murâd'* for the chosen ones mentioned in the report.[421] There are three levels for the *murâd*:

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[420] *Mureed* is the seeker. *Murâd* is the sought. Allah seeks him/her for purification and elevation before (or as) they seek Him.

[421] He (may Allah be pleased with him) is referring to a *ḥadeeth* reported by Ibn Abi ad-Dunyâ, from Anas, from the Prophet ﷺ:
"إِنَّ لِلَّهِ صَنَائِعَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ يَصُونُ بِهِمْ عَنِ الْبَلَاءِ، يُحْيِيهِمْ فِي عَافِيَةٍ، وَيُمِيتُهُمْ فِي عَافِيَةٍ، وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ فِي عَافِيَةٍ"
"Allah has chosen certain ones from His creations (for His protection). He is too protective of them to subject them to trials. He causes them to live and die in a state of complete wellbeing, and to enter paradise in a state of complete wellbeing." (This *ḥadeeth* is weak according to Ibn Ḥajar, al-Haythami, and al-Albâni.)

The first level is where [Allah] protects His servant by force when he/she attempts an imprudence by:[422]

1. spoiling desires
2. barring pleasures
3. closing the paths to ruin in their face by force

الْأُولَى أَنْ يَعْصِمَ الْعَبْدَ وَهُوَ مُسْتَشْرِفٌ لِلْجَفَاءِ اضْطِرَارًا:

1. بِتَنْغِيصِ الشَّهَوَاتِ
2. وَتَعْوِيقِ الْمَلَاذِ
3. وَسَدِّ مَسَالِكِ الْمَعَاطِبِ عَلَيْهِ إِكْرَاهًا

The concept of being sought by Allah is valid. You cannot seek Him in the first place unless He seeks you. However, it must be understood within the general framework of Divine justice and fairness. Allah said:

{وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُم ۖ بَلْ أَنتُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ}

{But the Jews and the Christians say: We are the children of Allah and His beloved. Say: Then why does He punish you for your sins? Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created...} *(al-Mâ'idah 5:18)*

[422] Ibn 'Aṭâ' (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"إذا أردتَ أنْ تَعْرِفَ قَدْرَكَ عِنْدَه فَانْظُر فِيما يُقِيمُك"

"If you wish to know your standing with Him, look at where He made you stand."

Examine this level carefully to see your standing with Him. However, know that God may want to test the resolve of His servants, so He intensifies their trials. To have a difficulty in your struggle against sin may result in your elevation, but one who enjoys sin without remorse is far from Allah at that time.

The second level is to:[423]

1. relieve the servant from the temporal outcomes of (his/her) shortcomings
2. spare him/her from reproach
3. give him/her control over the consequences of their errors,

as He did with Sulaymân (peace be upon him) when he killed the horses; He carried him on the wind—the gentle and the stormy—so he was given a substitute for the horses. He did likewise with Moosâ (peace be upon him) when he threw the tablets down and grabbed his brother's head; He did not blame him like He did with Âdam, Dâwood, and Yoonus.

The third level is for the True One to select His servant for (the favor of) ultimate devotion, like when He reached out to Moosâ when he went out for a torch; so He had him worked

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ:

1. يَضَعَ عَنِ الْعَبْدِ عَوَارِضَ النَّقْصِ
2. وَيُعَافِيَهُ مِنْ سِمَةِ اللَّائِمَةِ
3. وَيُمَلِّكَهُ عَوَاقِبَ الْهَفَوَاتِ

كَمَا فَعَلَ بِسُلَيْمَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ حِينَ قَتَلَ الْخَيْلَ فَحَمَلَهُ عَلَى الرِّيحِ الرُّخَاءِ وَالْعَاصِفِ، فَأَغْنَاهُ عَنِ الْخَيْلِ، وَفَعَلَ بِمُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ حِينَ أَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ، وَلَمْ يَعْتِبْ عَلَيْهِ كَمَا عَتَبَ عَلَى آدَمَ وَنُوحٍ وَدَاوُدَ وَيُونُسَ.

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ اجْتِبَاءُ الْحَقِّ عَبْدَهُ وَاسْتِخْلَاصُهُ إِيَّاهُ بِخَالِصَتِهِ، كَمَا ابْتَدَأَ مُوسَى وَهُوَ خَرَجَ يَقْتَبِسُ نَارًا، فَاصْطَنَعَهُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَأَبْقَى مِنْهُ رَسْمًا مُعَارًا.

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[423] In the first level, He protects them from error. However, when His most beloved ones commit errors, He may spare them of all negative outcomes. Instead, He may elevate them to higher rankings through their brokenness before Him, for instance, and their remorse.

out for Himself, and left of him a loaned image.[424]

[424] His name, body, and attributes—meaning his worldly existence through which he was identified and recognized by the rest of the creations.

Can we do something to be looked upon by Allah with His eye of mercy? The Prophet ﷺ said:

"الْتَمِسُوا الْخَيْرَ دَهْرَكُمْ كُلَّهُ، وَتَعَرَّضُوا لِنَفَحَاتِ رَحْمَةِ اللهِ، فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ نَفَحَاتٍ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ"

"Seek the good throughout your lives and expose yourselves to the gentle breeze of your Lord's mercy, for Allah will cause this breeze to touch whomever He wills." (Reported by Abu Nu'aym from Abu ad-Dardâ')

Seek the times, places, and conditions where you may be touched by those blossoms of His mercy.

SECTION VI: THE VALLEYS

AL-AWDIYAH (الأَوْدِيَة)

The section on the valleys contains ten chapters, and they are:	وأمَّا قِسْمُ الأَوْدِيَةِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أَبْوَابٍ وَهِيَ:
excellence	الإحسَانُ
knowledge	والعِلْمُ
wisdom	والحِكْمَةُ
insight	والبَصِيرَةُ
astuteness	والفِرَاسَةُ
veneration	والتَّعْظِيمُ
inspiration	والإلْهَامُ
serenity	والسَّكِينَةُ
tranquility	والطُّمَأنِينَةُ
aspiration	والهِمَّةُ

Station 51: Excellence[425]
al-Iḥsân (الإحْسَانِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Is the reward for *iḥsân* (good) [anything] but *iḥsân* (good)?} *[ar-Raḥmân 55:60]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

﴿هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ﴾.

We mentioned in the beginning of the book that *iḥsân* is a comprehensive prophetic expression that involves all gates of truths. It is to worship Allah as if you see Him.[426] It is of three levels:

قَدْ ذَكَرْنَا فِي صَدْرِ الكِتَابِ أَنَّ الْإِحْسَانَ اسْمٌ جَامِعٌ نَبَوِيٌّ يَجْمَعُ أَبْوَابَ الْحَقَائِقِ، وَهُوَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ.

وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

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[425] Excellence/perfection/kindness/embellishment. *Iḥsân* is a verbal noun that comes from *'ḥusn'* (beauty). It means doing things beautifully or doing beautiful things. One who does that which is beautiful is a *muḥsin.* Aesthetic enhancements are added to a structure only after it is complete. Beauty is, therefore, the ultimate perfection, and it includes all forms of perfection, so that is why *iḥsân* is translated sometimes as perfection. *Iḥsân*, then, shows in one's deeds as perfection, and it shows in one's interactions as kindness, because while unfairness is prohibited and fairness is required, kindness is the most perfect and encouraged way the servant may comport themselves.

[426] This is part of the long *ḥadeeth* of Jibreel when he asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about Islam, *eemân*, and *iḥsân*. *Iḥsân* in the context of this *ḥadeeth* is the ultimate form of excellence. No matter how perfect a deed is, the motive and purpose behind it is what ultimately determines its true value. When the ultimate purpose is the eternal Source of all beauty and excellence, one's *iḥsân* will no

The first level: excellence in intent by:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الْإِحْسَانُ فِي الْقَصْدِ

1. refining it with knowledge[427] .1 بِتَهْذِيبِهِ عِلْمًا
2. fastening it with resolve[428] .2 وَإِبْرَامِهِ عَزْمًا
3. purifying its (accompanying) states[429] .3 وَتَصْفِيَتِهِ حَالًا

The second level: excellence in the (spiritual) states, and it is to:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: الْإِحْسَانُ فِي الْأَحْوَالِ، وَهُوَ:

1. take care of them protectively[430] .1 أَنْ تُرَاعِيَهَا غَيْرَةً
2. conceal them with care[431] .2 وَتَسْتُرَهَا تَظَرُّفًا
3. rectify them for full actualization[432] .3 وَتُصَحِّحَهَا تَحَقِّقًا

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longer be about ostentation, self-actualization, an inclination to a particular virtue, or an aspiration to any want short of the Divine leasure: thus being most consistent, resolute, and balanced.

[427] Doing that which is right at the right time, place, and circumstance, for the right reason, in accordance with the Divine instruction conveyed by the Messenger ﷺ in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

[428] Resolve to act upon the good intentions and to finish what one started in the best way possible.

[429] Ensuring that the states of the heart—such as love, fear, hope, anxiety, and intimacy—that one goes through during their service are cleansed of any impurities.

[430] Since they may be transient and may be lost if you are not protective of them.

[431] A true *'ârif* conceals his/her states more than a person of means would hide their money. They may allow them to be seen only for a necessity.

The third level: excellence in managing time, and this is by:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: الْإِحْسَانُ فِي الْوَقْتِ، وَهُوَ:

1. never ceasing to behold (the Divine)

1. أَنْ لَا تُزَايِلَ الْمُشَاهَدَةَ أَبَدًا

2. not allowing anyone (else) to be the object of your aspiration

2. وَلَا تَخْلِطَ بِهِمَّتِكَ أَحَدًا

3. making your migration to the True One everlasting

3. وَتَجْعَلَ هِجْرَتَكَ إِلَى الْحَقِّ سَرْمَدًا

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[432] One should always be seeking to further enhance and purify their (spiritual) states.

Station 52: Knowledge[433]

al-'Ilm (العِلْم)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...and [We] had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.} *[al-Kahf 18:65]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِن لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا}.

Knowledge is that which is established through evidence and erases ignorance. It is of three levels:

The first level is apparent (exterior) knowledge, which is established through:

1. eyesight, or
2. true concurrence, or
3. validated experience[434]

The second level is hidden

الْعِلْمُ مَا قَامَ بِدَلِيلٍ وَرَفَعَ الْجَهْلَ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى عِلْمٌ جَلِيٌّ يَقَعُ

1. بِعِيَانٍ
2. وَاسْتِفَاضَةٌ صَحِيحَةٌ
3. أَوْ صِحَّةُ تَجْرِبَةٍ قَدِيمَةٍ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ عِلْمٌ خَفِيٌّ

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[433] See the previous chapter for the explanation of *iḥsân*.

[434] The concurrence or common knowledge must be based on an irrefutable premise, such as the common knowledge that China exists, which is based on the concurrence of so many people who have actually visited it. In addition to eyesight, the rest of the senses establish knowledge. In addition to experimentation, the intellect can reach knowledge through induction or deduction as well. In addition to all that, there is the knowledge of the Revelation, relayed by the one whose truthfulness is established, and there is the innate knowledge that is built into our spirits, like the existence of a Creator, the whole being bigger than the part, and the law of non-contradiction (LNC).

(interior) knowledge, which:

1. emanates from the purified (secrets)[435] of the purified bodies[436] by the purified water of (spiritual) training/discipline

2. manifests in the sincere souls with highest aspirations in the unoccupied times of attentive listening

3. is a knowledge that makes the unseen manifest and makes the manifest disappear and points to the union[437]

1. يَنْبُتُ فِي الْأَسْرَارِ الطَّاهِرَةِ، مِنَ الْأَبْدَانِ الزَّاكِيَةِ، بِمَاءِ الرِّيَاضَةِ الْخَالِصَةِ

2. وَيَظْهَرُ فِي الْأَنْفَاسِ الصَّادِقَةِ، لِأَهْلِ الْهِمَّةِ الْعَالِيَةِ، فِي الْأَحَايِينِ الْخَالِيَةِ، وَالْأَسْمَاعِ الصَّاغِيَةِ

3. وَهُوَ عِلْمٌ يُظْهِرُ الْغَائِبَ وَيُغَيِّبُ الشَّاهِدَ وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى الْجَمْعِ

The third level is the *'ladunni'* [438] knowledge:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ عِلْمٌ لَدُنِّيٌ

1. إِسْنَادُهُ وُجُودُهُ

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[435] Subtle-most element of the souls.

[436] Bodies that are nurtured by *ḥalâl* sustenance and complaint with Divine guidance.

[437] Togetherness with Allah in the Sunni sense. See the Chapter on Devotion (*at-Tabattul*).

[438] Of Divine origin. In the verse the sheikh started the chapter with, it refers to the knowledge granted to al-Khaḍir directly, not through Moosâ (peace be upon him). However, Moosâ (as) was sent to Bani Isrâ'eel, not to all humanity, and al-Khaḍir may have been a prophet. Ibn al-Qayyim points out in *Madârij* that it is pure heresy and clear apostasy to claim that one is not bound by the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad ﷺ like al-Khaḍir was not bound by the *Shari'ah* of Moosâ. There should be no disagreement about this. The knowledge our hearts receive from Allah only complements our knowledge of

1. its reference is its existence[439]
2. its realization is through observation[440]
3. its identifiers are innate[441]

No veil comes between it and the unseen.

2. وَإِدْرَاكُهُ عِيَانُهُ
3. وَنَعْتُهُ حُكْمُهُ
لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْغَيْبِ حِجَابٌ.

Shari'ah by guiding us to the right understanding and application of t and helping us make the right choices. This is where inspiration *(ilhâm)* and intuitive perception *(dhawq)*, as Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be pleased with him) stated, may help.

[439] This is not to belittle the knowledge of the Revelation transmitted through chains of narration. No Sunni sheikh like Imam al-Harawi would attempt that, although many deviant (or misinformed) claimants of Sufism have. Abiding by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, as understood by the righteous predecessors and transmitted to us by the great imams of *ahl-us-Sunnah*, is the distinction between Sunni Sufism and heretical Sufism.

[440] Unlike other types of knowledge that can be reached through the senses and contemplation, this can be realized only by the heart-sight after it has been granted to the servant by their Lord.

[441] Meaning you know its attributes only after you know it; you cannot reach it by following a map.

Station 53: Wisdom
al-H@ikmah (الحِكْمَةِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good...} *[al-Baqarah 2:269]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا}.

Wisdom is to place everything where it belongs.[442] It is of three levels:

الْحِكْمَةُ وَضْعُ الشَّيْءِ فِي مَوْضِعِهِ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level:

1. to give everything its due right,[443]
2. without exceeding its limit,[444]
3. or advancing it before its time or delaying it after it[445]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى:

1. أَنْ تُعْطِيَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَقَّهُ
2. وَلَا تَعْدِيَهُ حَدَّهُ
3. وَلَا تُعَجِّلَهُ عَنْ وَقْتِهِ وَلَا تُؤَخِّرَهُ عَنْهُ

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[442] Wisdom is needed in both judgment and action. Wisdom in action is to do the right thing at the right time and place and in the right measure and form, thus placing it where it belongs. Where firmness is warranted, one is firm, and where leniency is warranted, one is lenient.

[443] Knowing the importance and ranks of different deeds and prioritizing accordingly.

[444] The two extremes of excessiveness and laxity are condemnable. Moderation is the way of this religion.

[445] Doing the right thing at the wrong time may cause as much harm as doing the wrong thing. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him) says in *Madârij* that the pillars of wisdom are

The second level:

1. to behold [the judiciousness of] Allah's cause in His promises and threats
2. to recognize His justice in His judgments
3. to observe His graciousness in His withholding[446]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. أَنْ تَشْهَدَ نَظَرَ اللهِ فِي وَعْدِهِ
2. وَتَعْرِفَ عَدْلَهُ فِي حُكْمِهِ
3. وَتَلْحَظَ بِرَّهُ فِي مَنْعِهِ

The third level:

1. your exploration becomes guided by insight[447]
2. your guidance is to the truth[448]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. أَنْ تَبْلُغَ فِي اسْتِدْلَالِكَ الْبَصِيرَةَ
2. وَفِي إِرْشَادِكَ

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knowledge, forbearance, and deliberation. Forbearance *(ḥilm)* rids us of emotionality, biases, and prejudices. One should try to attain these while imploring Allah to give them *ḥikmah*.

[446] If you only knew His wisdom in withholding what you desire, you would be as grateful for His withholding as you are for His giving.

[447] The quest for the truth not only requires cleverness or a sound intellect to examine the evidence, but also an unbiased and enlightened insight. There is a difference between the sophist and the philosopher. Also, philosophers may be biased, hasty, or arrogant and thus deprived of the blessings of Divine guidance. *'Faqeeh'* may be used now to refer to someone who knows the technicalities of *fiqh* and memorizes the rulings without knowing their sources, contingencies, nuances, and purposes. In the past, one was not considered a *faqeeh* until they had mastered all that and acted upon their knowledge as well.

3. your pointing is to the ultimate goal[449]

الْحَقِيقَةَ

3. وَفِي إِشَارَتِكَ الْغَايَةَ

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[448] Ibn al-Qayyim says in *Madârij* that this could mean either your finding the truth when people guide you, or you guiding the people only to the truth.

[449] The goal is Allah.

Station 54: Insight[450]
al-Bas@eerah (الْبَصِيرَة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{Say: This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me...} *[Yoosuf 12:108]*

{قُلْ هَٰذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي}.

Insight is that which rids you of bewilderment.[451] It is of three levels:

الْبَصِيرَةُ مَا يُخَلِّصُكَ مِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ

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[450] *Baṣeerah* comes from *baṣar* (vision). It is the vision of the heart that sees through the outer surface.

[451] According to Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him), it is a light that Allah instills in the hearts of His servants, thereby empowering them to behold, with their heart-sight, the truth that was revealed to the messengers.

One may also say it is the in-depth realization of the words of Allah that is not limited to or veiled by the exteriors of the material world around us. Allah said:

{وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَّا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ}

{And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.} *(al-An'âm 6:115)*

All His statements are true and His commandments are just, orderly, and purposeful.

1. His statements include His revelations about Himself and the unseen, humankind, and the universe, as well as His promises and warnings. Complete acceptance of these, while maintaining belief in His transcendence, is the way to *baṣeerah* in these realms.

دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is to know that the reported instructions of *Shari'ah* come from certain sources and have guaranteed consequences. Thus, you satisfy their rights by finding genuine pleasure in them and being fiercely protective of them.[452]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى أَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ الْخَبَرَ الْقَائِمَ بِتَمْهِيدِ الشَّرِيعَةِ يَصْدُرُ عَنْ عَيْنٍ لَا يُخَافُ عَوَاقِبُهَا، فَتَرَى مِنْ حَقِّهِ أَنْ تَلْذَّهُ يَقِينًا وَتَغْضَبَ لَهُ غَيْرَةً.

The second level is to observe:

1. the justice in the True One's guiding and misguiding[453]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ:

1. فِي هِدَايَةِ الْحَقِّ وَإِضْلَالِهِ إِصَابَةَ الْعَدْلِ

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2. His commandments include His creation and ongoing control of the universal order, and His instructions. The way to *baṣeerah* in these realms is by complete submission to His laws—as explained by the infallible and practiced by the righteous generations—and complete acceptance of His decrees, as well as diligent exploration of His creation (including introspection). Such exploration is not limited to natural sciences, but also includes psychology, anthropology, sociology, politics, and so on—all while observing the certainties of the revealed knowledge.

[452] The teachings of Islam come from a certain and infallible source; following them will result in a guaranteed desirable outcome, so those who follow them have nothing to fear or to be anxious about. They must, therefore, rejoice in their obedience and passionately guard the Divine bounds.

[453] All He does is the manifestation of His perfection, glory, beauty, justice, and compassion. When He guides someone, it is out of His grace; and when He misguides, it is out of His justice.

2. His graciousness in His distribution[454]

2. وَفِي تَلْوِينِ أَقْسَامِهِ رِعَايَةَ الْبِرِّ

3. His friendliness in His pulling[455]

3. وَتُعَايِنَ فِي جَذْبِهِ حَبْلَ الْوَصْلِ

The third level is insight that:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ بَصِيرَةٌ:

1. causes *ma'rifah* (inner knowledge) to gush forth[456]

1. تُفَجِّرُ الْمَعْرِفَةَ

2. ratifies the gestures[457]

2. وَتُثَبِّتُ الْإِشَارَةَ

3. yields astuteness[458]

3. وَتُثْبِتُ الْفِرَاسَةَ

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[454] He gives and withholds, apportions and distributes, for purposes not completely known to us; but He is, in all cases, All-Good and All-Gracious.

[455] When He pulls you to His service, it is because He desires your nearness.

[456] *Ma'rifah* is the inner knowledge that enlivens the heart and causes its trees of virtue to yield their fruit.

[457] The gestures are those concepts and thoughts that cannot be expressed verbally. *Baṣeerah* will groom them and anchor them in the heart, so as to not fade.

[458] *Firâsah* is addressed in the following chapter.

Station 55: Astuteness[459]
al-Firâsah (الْفِرَاسَةِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Indeed in that are signs for those who discern.} *[al-Ḥijr 15:75]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ}.

Tawassum (discernment) is synonymous with *firâsah* (spiritual astuteness). It is realization of a matter of the unseen without obvious indication or empirical experience.[460] It is of three levels:

التَّوَسُّمُ التَّفَرُّسُ وَهُوَ اسْتِئْنَاسُ حُكْمِ غَيْبٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ اسْتِدْلَالٍ بِشَاهِدٍ ولا اخْتِبَارٍ بِتَجْرِبَةٍ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

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[459] *Firâsah* is about the power of good prediction. The possessor of this quality can tell people apart from their conduct and may be able to see what others may not, thereby predicting what they cannot. Sometimes, it is through the exquisite ability to detect subtle signals, but what the sheikh is addressing here is mainly that which results from inspiration or disclosure.

[460] The unseen is the exclusive domain of Allah. He said:

{قُل لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ}

{Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah...} *(an-Naml 27:65)*

He would sometimes allow the prophets access to some of it. He said:

{وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِن رُّسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ}

{...Nor would Allah reveal to you the unseen. But [instead], Allah chooses of His messengers whom He wills...} *(Âli 'Imrân 3:179)*

The difference between the knowledge of the messengers and that of Allah is that their knowledge is contingent upon His

الْأُولَى: فِرَاسَةٌ طَارِئَةٌ نَادِرَةٌ، تَسْقُطُ عَلَى لِسَانٍ وَحْشِيٍّ فِي الْعُمْرِ مَرَّةً، لِحَاجَةِ سَمْعِ مُرِيدٍ صَادِقٍ إِلَيْهَا. لَا يُتَوَقَّفُ عَلَى مُخْرِجِهَا، وَلَا يُؤْبَهُ لِصَاحِبِهَا. وَهَذَا شَيْءٌ لَا يَخْلُصُ مِنَ الْكَهَانَةِ وَمَا

The first: transient and rare *firâsah*, which descends on the uncultivated tongue once in a lifetime for the need of a sincere seeker to hear it. The reason for its utterance is not traceable and the one who utters it is insignificant. This is something that cannot be differentiated from fortunetelling and its likes because

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permission and limited. This is why Allah instructed His Prophet ﷺ to say:

{قُل لَّا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَاسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ}

{Say: I hold not for myself [the power of] benefit or harm, except what Allah has willed. And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth [good], and no harm would have touched me...} *(al-A'râf 7:188)*

Some people may be given access to some of the knowledge of the unseen through inspiration *(ilhâm)* or disclosure *(kashf)*. Their knowledge is different from that of the messengers in two major ways:

1. It is not certain. The *muḥaddath* (inspired man) of this *Ummah*, 'Umar, was still unable to see what Abu Bakr saw at the time of Ḥudaybiyah or at the time of apostasy.
2. It is not to be shown off to establish credibility. The messengers required *mu'jizât* (miracles: temporary suspension of the natural order through Divine intervention) because they needed the people to submit to the guidance they brought forth from God. This is not the same concerning the *karamât* (graces), which are supernatural like miracles, but meant only to honor their recipient or assist them or someone else.

it does not refer to certainty, does not emanate from knowledge, and is not driven by an existent state.[461]

ضَاهَاهَا، لِأَنَّهَا لَمْ تُشِرْ عَنْ عَيْنٍ، وَلَمْ تَصْدُرْ عَنْ عِلْمٍ. وَلَمْ تُسَقْ بِوُجُود.

The second level:

1. *firâsah* that is the fruit of *eemân*,

2. that sprouts from the true *ḥâl* (state),

3. and shines with the light of disclosure

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ:

1. فِرَاسَةٌ تُجْنَى مِنْ غَرْسِ الْإِيمَانِ

2. وَتَطْلُعُ مِنْ صِحَّةِ الْحَالِ

3. وَتَلْمَعُ مِنْ نُورِ الْكَشْفِ

The third level:

1. a most noble *firâsah*,

2. that is not produced by deliberation,

3. but comes forth from the chosen tongues, either explicitly or through symbolism

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. فِرَاسَةٌ سَرِيَّةٌ

2. لَمْ تَجْتَلِبْهَا رَوِيَّةٌ

3. عَلَى لِسَانٍ مُصْطَنَعٍ تَصْرِيحًا أَوْ رَمْزًا

[461] A good shot by a bad shooter. Wisdom may still be harvested from uncultivated hearts.

Station 56: Exaltation
at-Ta'dheem (التعظيم)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{What is [the matter] with you that you do not attribute to Allah [due] grandeur [?]} *[Nooḥ 71:13]*

قَالَ الله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا}.

Exaltation is the recognition of [His] grandeur while showing humility before it. It is of three levels:

التَّعْظِيمُ: مَعْرِفَةُ الْعَظَمَةِ، مَعَ التَّذَلُّلِ لَهَا. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the exaltation of the commands and prohibitions, and this requires that:

الدَّرَجَةُ الأُولَى: تَعْظِيمُ الْأَمْرِ وَالنَّهْيِ، وَهُوَ:

1. they are not compromised by unjustified concessions
2. they are not treated with excessive stringency
3. they are not hinged on causes that may weaken compliance[462]

1. أَنْ لَا يُعَارَضَا بِتَرَخُّصٍ جَافٍ
2. وَلَا يُعَرَّضَا لِتَشَدُّدٍ غَالٍ
3. وَلَا يُحْمَلَا عَلَى عِلَّةٍ تُوهِنُ الِانْقِيَادَ

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[462] One command may have more than one cause. Hasty attribution of causes to the commands and prohibitions may result in their dismissal where they should be applicable. Additionally, the ultimate (unmeasurable) *ḥikmah* (wisdom) may not be used to void the laws. For example, one may never say that the purpose of prayers is to strengthen our bond with Allah and forbid us from evil, concluding that those who have a sweet relationship with Allah and refrain from evil do not need to pray.

The second level is the exaltation of the decrees such that:

1. they would not be perceived as inequitable[463]
2. they are not resisted with knowledge[464]
3. a compensation would not be solicited[465]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: تَعْظِيمُ الْحُكْمِ:

1. أَنْ يُبْغَى لَهُ عِوَجٌ
2. أَوْ يُدَافَعَ بِعِلْمٍ
3. أَوْ يَرْضَى بِعِوَضٍ

The third level is the exaltation of the True One, Glorified is He, and this entails that:

1. you do not recognize any cause

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: تَعْظِيمُ الْحَقِّ سُبْحَانَهُ. وَهُوَ:

1. أَنْ لَا تَجْعَلَ

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[463] The decrees of Allah are all just and good, even if that which is decreed is not, as Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him) points out in *Madârij*. When He decrees that someone commit an injustice, that person is blameworthy for the injustice, but Allah's decree is not to be faulted since His ultimate wisdom warranted that decree within His master plan. Evil is not to be attributed to Allah, as the Prophet ﷺ said, even though all decrees—good and evil—are His, as he ﷺ also confirmed.

[464] The proper way to understand this, as Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him) clarifies in *Madârij*, is to presume that the sheikh meant that the decrees of Allah that have come to pass and the knowledge of the Revelation He granted to us are all from Him, and they may not be pitted against each other.

[465] One should never see themselves as having any entitlements over Allah. Enduring gracefully through hard decrees is our obligation. This, however, does not mean that the Most Generous does not reward us for this endurance. It also does not mean that we may not find comfort in His promises.

aside from Him[466] دُونَهُ سَبَبًا

2. you do not see any right binding on Him وَلَا تَرَى عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا .2

3. you do not resist any choice by Him[467] أَوْ تُنَازِعَ لَهُ اخْتِيَارًا .3

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[466] Allah is the first and final Cause, so we should treat all causes as means to goals that were set up by Him. They are not effective in themselves, except with His permission as part of the universal order that He alone created and He alone maintains.

[467] His commands are known to us, and we must surrender to them. The decrees that befall us must be accepted. The decrees that have not come to pass are not known to us. Regardless of how eminent they may seem, we seek what is good and evade and resist what is harmful. All of this is encapsulated in the saying of the Messenger ﷺ:

"الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ ، وَفِي كُلٍّ خَيْرٌ احْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ ، وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللهِ وَلَا تَعْجَزْ ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ : لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا ، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ : قَدَرُ اللهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ ، فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ "

"A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak one, and both are good. Keenly pursue that which is beneficial for you. Keep invoking Allah's help and do not be powerless. If you are afflicted by something, do not say, 'Had I done such-and-such, it would have resulted in such and such,' but say only, 'Allah decreed a matter and did as He willed.' The word 'if' opens the gates of satanic works." (Muslim)

Station 57: Inspiration
al-Ilhâm (الإلهام)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Said one who had knowledge from the Scripture: I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you...} *[an-Naml 27:40]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

﴿قَالَ الَّذِي عِندَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ﴾.

Ilhâm[468] is the station of the *muḥaddatheen*.[469] It is above the

الْإِلْهَامَ مَقَامُ الْمُحَدَّثِينَ، وَهُوَ فَوْقَ الْفِرَاسَةِ، لِأَنَّ

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[468] *Ilhâm* means conveying knowledge/guidance to someone, hinting, indicating, gesturing, subtle direction, or private communication. It is best translated as inspiration. However, there are different levels of inspiration that have special names in Arabic. *Ilhâm* is one of them. People disagree over its place in comparison to other forms of inspiration. However, despite some differences among the mainstream scholars regarding its place in Islamic epistemology and the pursuit of *hidâyah*, they agree that it is inferior in clarity and certainty to the *waḥy* received by the prophets. It has a complementary role, allowing us to have a better understanding of the *waḥy* and better application of it, but it is always subservient to it and never a substitute for it. It is also subjective and personal, so while someone may feel their heart is being guided to some choice or direction, they cannot use this *ilhâm* to prove or disprove anything. This is another difference between it and the binding *waḥy* of the prophets, who established the veracity of their prophethood through miracles, making their teachings binding on those to whom they were sent. The understanding of the proper place of *ilhâm* is of utmost importance for the seekers, since

[station of] *firâsah* (astuteness), الْفِرَاسَةَ رُبَّمَا وَقَعَتْ نَادِرَةً، أو

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it is one of the main differences between Sunni/ true Sufism and deviant/false Sufism.

There is a general *ilhâm* of all human beings. Allah said:

{وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا * فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا}

{And [by] the soul and He Who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.} *(ash-Shams 91:7-8)*

All creations receive some *ilhâm* from Allah concerning their roles and functions. Allah said:

{وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ}

{And your Lord inspired to the bee: Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and [in] that which they construct.} *(an-Naḥl 16:68)*

The inspiration the sheikh addresses here is a special one for special people: the transformed souls who deserve the most-needed guidance of the hearts.

469 *Muḥaddath* is the passive voice of *muḥaddith*. '*Ḥadeeth*' means speech, narration, etc. The one who speaks is a *muḥaddith* and the one who is spoken to is a *muḥaddath*. 'Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

"قَدْ كَانَ فِي الأُمَمِ قَبْلَكُمْ مُحَدَّثُونَ فَإِنْ يَكُنْ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْهُمْ أَحَدٌ فَإِنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ مِنْهُمْ."

"There were among the people before you inspired persons *(muḥaddathoon)*, and if there were any such among my *Ummah*, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb would be one of them." (Agreed upon)

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be pleased with him) reflected on this and explained that the reason why the nations before us had many *muḥaddathoon*—while the Prophet ﷺ said, "if there were any such among my *Ummah*"—is that the Prophet of this *Ummah* ﷺ left for it a clear path; if we adhere to it, it will be enough for us. It is also noteworthy here to say that 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) never countered the Qur'an or *Sunnah* with his *taḥdeeth*, which is the highest form of *ilhâm* a non-prophet may have.

because *firâsah* may take place infrequently, and at times it may be unattainable, whereas *ilhâm* can be had only in a lofty station of steadiness. It is of three levels:

اسْتُصْعِبَتْ عَلَى صَاحِبِهَا وَقْتًا، واسْتَعْصَتْ عَلَيْهِ، وَالْإِلْهَامُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا فِي مَقَامِ عَتِيدٍ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level: a fact that is transmitted by means of certain inspiration *(waḥy)*, whether it is accompanied by hearing or not.[470]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: نَبَأٌ يَقَعُ وَحْيًا قَاطِعًا مَقْرُونًا بِسَمَاعٍ أَو مُطْلَقًا.

The second level is an inspiration that manifests in reality. The indications of its genuineness are that:

1. it does not tear the veils[471]
2. it does not exceed the limit[472]
3. it never errs

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: إِلْهَامٌ يَقَعُ عِيَانًا، وَعَلَامَةُ صِحَّتِهِ أَنَّهُ:

1. لَا يَخْرِقُ سِتْرًا
2. وَلَا يُجَاوِزُ حَدًّا
3. وَلَا يُخْطِئُ أَبَدًا

The third level is an inspiration that:

1. leads decisively to the ultimate

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. إِلْهَامٌ يَجْلُو عَيْنَ التَّحْقِيقِ صَرْفًا

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[470] In some manuscripts, this level starts with 'inspiration of a prophet' instead of 'a fact:' then the meaning will be obvious. However, the trouble with that version will be the order of the three levels, because the sheikh usually addresses them in an ascending order.

[471] Between a seeker and those stations that are yet to be disclosed, or it does not lead one to tear the veils that covered them from the recognition of their ranking by the masses, which may cause them great trials.

[472] Does not cause one to transgress the limits of the *deen* while acquiring this *ilhâm* or after it.

ascertainment[473]

2. speaks clearly of pre-eternity[474]

3. —and the zenith to which *ilhâm* leads is indescribable[475]

2. وَيَنْطِقُ عَنْ عَيْنِ الْأَزَلِ مَحْضًا

3. وَلِلإِلْهَامِ غَايَةٌ تَمْتَنِعُ الإِشَارَةُ إِلَيْهَا

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[473] Which is the state of *shuhood* (beholding) of the One: a *shuhood* that causes all others *(siwâ)* to practically vanish from one's beholding, although they do not vanish from existence.

[474] The *shuhood* of that time makes one devoted to the only One Who was existent then.

[475] Only those who are there can understand what is there.

Station 58: Tranquility
as-Sakeenah (السَّكِينَةُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers...} *[al-Fath 48:4]*

اسْمُ السَّكِينَةُ لِثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ.
أَوَّلُهَا: سَكِينَةُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الَّتِي أُعْطُوهَا فِي التَّابُوتِ . قَالَ أَهْلُ التَّفْسِيرِ : هِيَ رِيحٌ هَفَّافَةٌ . وَذَكَرُوا صِفَتَهَا. وَفِيهَا ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْيَاءَ هِيَ:
1. لِأَنْبِيَائِهِم مُعْجِزَةٌ
2. وَلِمُلُوكِهِمْ كَرَامَةٌ
3. وَهِيَ آيَةُ النُّصْرَةِ تَخْلَعُ قُلُوبَ الْأَعْدَاءِ بِصَوْتِهَا

Sakeenah[476] (tranquility) refers to three things:

The first is the *sakeenah* of Bani Isrâ'eel given to them in the chest (the Ark of the Covenant). The commentators of the Qur'an say that it is a smooth, good wind, and they spoke of its description. It had three characteristics; [it was]:

1. a miracle for their prophets
2. a *karâmah*[477] for their kings

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[476] *Sakeenah* means tranquility, and it is derived from the root word *'sakana,'* which means 'dwelled' or 'stayed still.' Think of how someone feels when they enter their home after a long journey. Think of the assurance, security, rest, peace, calmness, quiescence, repose, etc.

[477] *'Karâmah'* (pl. *karamât*) refers to the supernatural wonders ascribed to the *awliyâ'* (friends) of Allah. The word comes from the three-lettered root (كرم) and implies generosity and honoring. They are special gifts from Allah for the transformed souls of the most

3. a sign of victory whose sound made the hearts of the enemies tremble out of fear when the two rows collided in battle

رُعْبًا إِذَا الْتَقَى الصَّفَّانِ لِلْقِتَالِ .

The second *sakeenah* is that which:

1. manifests on the tongues of the inspired; it is not acquirable, but rather a kind gesture of the doing of the True One

2. casts wisdom on the tongue of the inspired, like the angels cast revelation into the hearts of the prophets

3. makes the inspired speak the deepest truths, bringing life to the inner souls and removing all doubts

والسَّكِينَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: هِيَ الَّتِي:

1. تَنْطِقُ عَلَى لِسَانِ الْمُحَدَّثِينَ . لَيْسَتْ هِيَ شَيْئًا يُمْلَكُ . إِنَّمَا هِيَ شَيْءٌ مِنْ لَطَائِفِ صُنْعِ الْحَقِّ .

2. تُلْقِي عَلَى لِسَانِ الْمُحَدَّثِ الْحِكْمَةَ كَمَا يُلْقِي الْمَلَكُ الْوَحْيَ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ.

3. وَتَنْطِقُ الْمُحَدَّثِينَ بِنُكَتِ الْحَقَائِقِ مَعَ تَرْوِيحِ الْأَسْرَارِ ، وَكَشْفِ الشُّبَهِ .

The third *sakeenah* is the one that descended onto the heart of the Prophet ﷺ and the believers,[478] and it

والسَّكِينَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ : هِيَ الَّتِي نَزَلَتْ عَلَى قَلْبِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، وَقُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. وَهِيَ شَيْءٌ يَجْمَعُ قُوَّةً وَرُوحًا:

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pious to honor them. Sometimes, they may be granted to the beginners to support them and motivate them.

[478] Allah said:

{إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ}

{When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism—the chauvinism of the time of ignorance. But Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers...} *(al-Fatḥ 48:26)*

is something that brings together power and comfort;

1. the fearful find comfort in it
2. the grieving and the aggravated find solace in it
3. the defiant, rebellious sinner humbles himself/herself to it

1. يَسْكُنُ إِلَيْهِ الْخَائِفُ
2. وَيَتَسَلَّى بِهِ الْحَزِينُ وَالضَّجِرُ
3. وَيَسْتَكِينُ إِلَيْهِ الْعَصِيُّ وَالْجَرِئُ وَالْأَبِيُّ

As for the *sakeenah* of dignity[479] that He brought down onto its people and made it one of their qualities, it is the resultant light of the third *sakeenah* that we just mentioned, and it is of three levels:

وَأَمَّا سَكِينَةُ الْوَقَارِ ، الَّتِي نَزَّلَهَا تَعَالَى لِأَرْبَابِهَا : فَإِنَّهَا ضِيَاءُ تِلْكَ السَّكِينَةِ الثَّالِثَةِ الَّتِي ذَكَرْنَاهَا. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the *sakeenah* of the *khushoo'*[480] of service, done with:

1. care
2. exaltation
3. attentiveness

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى سَكِينَةُ الْخُشُوعِ عِنْدَ الْقِيَامِ بِالْخِدْمَةِ:

1. رِعَايَةً
2. وَتَعْظِيمًا
3. وَحُضُورًا

The second level is the *sakeenah* of dealings, achieved by:

1. self-reckoning
2. gentleness with the creations

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ السَّكِينَةُ عِنْدَ الْمُعَامَلَةِ

1. بِمُحَاسَبَةِ النَّفْسِ
2. وَمُلَاطَفَةِ الْخَلْقِ

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[479] Dignity and grace will be the cloak of the people of this *sakeenah*.

[480] *Khushoo'* (submissive solemnity) is the combination of calmness and humility. There are other implications of the word *khushoo'* as well, such as shyness, attentiveness, fear, and reverence.

3. watchfulness of the True One

The third level is the *sakeenah* that:

1. brings about acceptance of the Divine allotment of shares
2. prevents from excessive *shaṭ-ḥ*[481]
3. stops its possessor at their ranking

Sakeenah descends only into the heart of a prophet or a *waliy*.

3. وَمُرَاقَبَةِ الْحَقّ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ السَّكِينَةُ الَّتِي:

1. تُثْبِتُ الرِّضَا بِالْقَسْمِ
2. وَتَمْنَعُ مِنَ الشَّطْحِ الْفَاحِشِ
3. وَتَقِفُ صَاحِبَهَا عَلَى حَدِّ الرُّتْبَةِ

وَالسَّكِينَةُ لَا تَنْزِلُ إِلَّا فِي قَلْبِ نَبِيٍّ أَوْ وَلِيٍّ.

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[481] *Shaṭaḥât* are aberrant esoteric utterances made during trances of intense spiritual experiences; *sh-ṭ-ḥ* is the verbal noun. (See more about this in the Introduction.)

Station 59: Serenity
aṭ-Ṭuma'neenah (الطُّمَأْنِينَة)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{O reassured soul} *[al-Fajr 89:27]*

الطُّمَأْنِينَةُ: سُكُونٌ يُقَوِّيهِ أَمْنٌ صَحِيحٌ، شَبِيهٌ بِالْعِيَانِ.
وَبَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ السَّكِينَةِ فَرْقَانِ:
أَحَدُهُمَا: أَنَّ السَّكِينَةَ صَوْلَةٌ تُورِثُ خُمُودَ الْهَيْبَةِ أَحْيَانًا. وَالطُّمَأْنِينَةُ سُكُونُ أَمْنٍ فِي اسْتِرَاحَةِ أُنْسٍ.
وَالثَّانِي: أَنَّ السَّكِينَةَ تَكُونُ نَعْتًا. وَتَكُونُ حِينًا بَعْدَ حِينٍ، وَالطُّمَأْنِينَةُ لَا تُفَارِقُ صَاحِبَهَا. وهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Ṭuma'neenah is a quiescence that is buttressed by valid security,[482] which is similar in certainty to the witness of the eye. There are two differences between it and *sakeenah* (tranquility):

The first: *sakeenah* is an impetus that causes, at times, the abatement of the [intensity of the] awe.[483] However, *ṭuma'neenah* is the quiescence of security in the oasis of comforting intimacy *(uns)*.[484]

The second: *sakeenah* is a description that may simply be had at times, whereas *ṭuma'neenah* never separates from its people.

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[482] Not the fake security that results from heedlessness, wishful thinking, and delusions.

[483] The awe that comes with reflection on the attributes of might and rigor.

[484] The *uns* that comes in the state of togetherness with the True One, reflecting on His attributes of mercy and beauty and on the Divine essence *(dhât)*.

It is of three levels:

The first level is the serenity of the heart in the remembrance of Allah. It is the serenity found by:

1. the fearful in hope
2. the aggravated in (the resignation to) destiny
3. the afflicted in (the expectation of) reward

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى طُمَأْنِينَةُ الْقَلْبِ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ. وَهِيَ طُمَأْنِينَةُ:

1. الْخَائِفِ إِلَى الرَّجَاءِ
2. وَالضَّجِرِ إِلَى الْحُكْمِ
3. وَالْمُبْتَلَى إِلَى الْمَثُوبَةِ

The second level is the serenity of the soul:

1. in the disclosure[485] while traveling
2. in the promise while yearning[486]
3. in the union while in *tafriqah* (dispersion)[487]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ طُمَأْنِينَةُ الرُّوحِ:

4. فِي الْقَصْدِ إِلَى الْكَشْفِ
5. وَفِي الشَّوْقِ إِلَى الْعِدَةِ
6. وَفِي التَّفْرِقَةِ إِلَى الْجَمْعِ

The third level:

1. the serenity in the (Divine) gentleness while beholding the

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. طُمَأْنِينَةُ شُهُودِ الْحَضْرَةِ إِلَى اللُّطْفِ

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[485] Disclosures show the details of the way and the destination, giving assurance to the traveler.

[486] While yearning for His pleasure, you find comfort in His promise to the good doers.

[487] Your occupations in the *dunyâ* cause *tafriqah* (dispersion, distraction, discomposure), and your togetherness with Allah, during your devotional retreats (or even during your occupation), will provide your spirit with comfort and composure.

(Divine) presence[488]

2. the serenity in (the station of) *baqâ'* (subsistence) while in [the state of] union[489]

3. the serenity in the light of pre-eternity while

in one's station[490]

2. وَطُمَأْنِينَةُ الْجَمْعِ إِلَى الْبَقَاءِ

3. وَطُمَأْنِينَةُ الْمَقَامِ إِلَى نُورِ الْأَزَلِ

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[488] While your heart is beholding the Divine, the realization of His gentleness will keep it at ease.

[489] Your *baqâ* (subsistence by Allah, with Him, and for Him) will result from your togetherness with Him and your heart will find stability in that loftiest station.

[490] The light of pre-eternity removes every darkness and puts all things in perspective, realizing the oneness of the origin.

Station 60: Drive
al-Himmah (الْهِمَّةِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].} *[an-Najm 53:17]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى}.

Himmah (drive) is that which impels one to pursue the intended without equivocation. Those who have it will have no control over it, and they are not distracted from it. It is of three levels:

الْهِمَّةُ مَا يَمْلِكُ الِانْبِعَاثَ لِلْمَقْصُودِ صِرْفًا، لَا يَتَمَالَكُ صَاحِبُهَا، وَلَا يَلْتَفِتُ عَنْهَا. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is a *himmah* that:

1. protects the heart from the lowliness of seeking the perishable
2. urges it to aspire for the everlasting
3. purifies it from the smudge of procrastination

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى هِمَّةٌ:

1. تَصُونُ الْقَلْبَ مِن خِسَّةِ الرَّغْبَةِ فِي الْفَانِي
2. وَتَحْمِلُهُ عَلَى الرَّغْبَةِ فِي الْبَاقِي
3. وَتُصَفِّيهِ مِنْ كَدَرِ التَّوَانِي

The second level is a *himmah* that causes aversion to:

1. occupation with defects[491]
2. consumption by deeds[492]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ هِمَّةٌ تُورِثُ أَنَفَةً مِنَ

1. الْمُبَالَاةِ بِالْعِلَلِ
2. وَالنُّزُولِ عَلَى

[491] The defects here refer to occupation with the reward of the deeds and their immediate effects, such as the change of *aḥwâl* (spiritual states), which bars one from complete devotion.

3. confidence in hope[493] الْعَمَلِ

3. وَالثِّقَةِ بِالْأَمَلِ

The third level is a *himmah* that: وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ هِمَّةٌ:

1. transcends the states and transactions[494] 1. تَتَصَاعَدُ عَنِ الْأَحْوَالِ وَالْمُعَامَلَاتِ

2. denounces the compensations and rankings[495] 2. وَتُزْرِي بِالْأَعْوَاضِ وَالدَّرَجَاتِ

3. pursues the [Divine] essence beyond the attributes[496] 3. وَتَنْحُو عَنِ النُّعُوتِ نَحْوَ الذَّاتِ

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[492] When the hearts do not travel with the bodies and the deeds of the interior are neglected in favor of the acts of the exterior.

[493] One should not have excessive hope or confidence in their own salvation. These sow the seeds of arrogance and self-delusion.

[494] When the *himmah* is all gathered for one end, it will not stop short of it or look at anything other than it.

[495] While we should always aspire to the reward of Allah, our pursuit of His pleasure should always eclipse any other pursuits. Those who will earn His pleasure will not miss anything.

[496] Absorption in one or some of the Divine attributes and actions may bar the person from connecting with the Divine essence. Reflecting on all attributes is our means of reflecting on and attaining togetherness with the Divine essence.

SECTION VII: THE STATES

AL-AḤWÂL (الأحْوَالِ)

As for the section on the states, it has ten chapters:	وأمَّا قِسْمُ الأحْوَالِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوَابٍ وَهِيَ:
love	المَحَبَّةُ
protectiveness	والغَيْرَةُ
yearning	والشَّوْقُ
anxiety	والقَلَقُ
thirst	والعَطَشُ
ecstasy	والوَجْدُ
astonishment	والدَّهَشُ
bewilderment	والهَيَمَانُ
lightning	والبَرْقُ
taste	والذَّوْقُ

Station 61: Love
al-Maḥabbah (المَحَبَّةُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
﴿مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ
يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ﴾.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...whoever of you should revert from his religion—Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him...} *[al-Mâ'idah 5:54]*

الْمَحَبَّةُ : تَعَلُّقُ الْقَلْبِ بَيْنَ
الْهِمَّةِ وَالْأُنْسِ فِي الْبَذْلِ
وَالْمَنْعِ عَلَى الإِفْرَادِ.
وَالْمَحَبَّةُ أَوَّلُ أَوْدِيَةِ الْفَنَاءِ،
وَالْعَقَبَةُ الَّتِي يَنْحَدِرُ مِنْهَا
عَلَى مَنَازِلِ الْمَحْوِ. وَهِيَ
آخِرُ مَنْزِلٍ تَلْتَقِي فِيهِ
مُقَدِّمَةُ الْعَامَّةِ، وَسَاقَةُ
الْخَاصَّةِ. وَمَا دُونَهَا
أَغْرَاضٌ لِأَعْوَاضٍ.
وَالْمَحَبَّةُ هِيَ سِمَةُ الطَّائِفَةِ

Love is the exclusive clinging of the heart [to the Beloved] flanked by drive *(himmah)* and comforting intimacy *(uns)*,[497] when given and when deprived.[498] It is the beginning of the valleys of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation) and the steep pass from which he or she descends into the stations of obliteration.[499] It is the last station where the front rows of the masses meet the back rows of the elites.

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[497] The drive of pursuing the Beloved and the comforting intimacy with Him upon His acceptance and reciprocation.

[498] This could mean when you are enjoying Allah's bounties or enduring through hardship. It may also mean that when you give, you give for Him, and when you withhold, you withhold for Him.

[499] Many masters argue that subsistence in the station of love is the way of the prophets and greatest seekers, and it is superior to obliteration, intoxication, and all manifestations and realities of self-annihilation.

وَعُنْوَانُ الطَّرِيقَةِ وَمَعْقِدُ النِّسْبَةِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Whatever is beneath it is self-interest in compensation. Love is the hallmark of the community,[500] the guide on the path, and the condition of belonging.[501] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: مَحَبَّةٌ تَقْطَعُ الْوَسَاوِسَ وَتُلِذُّ الْخِدْمَةَ وَتُسَلِّي عَنِ الْمَصَائِبِ. وَهِيَ مَحَبَّةٌ:

The first level is a love that ends suspicions and whispers,[502] sweetens one's service, and lightens tragedies. It is a love that:

1. تَنْبُتُ مِنْ مُطَالَعَةِ الْمِنَّةِ
2. وَتَثْبُتُ بِاتِّبَاعِ السُّنَّةِ
3. وَتَنْمُو عَلَى الْإِجَابَةِ بِالْفَاقَةِ

1. emanates from beholding grace
2. becomes firm by following the *Sunnah*
3. blossoms by responding with brokenness

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ مَحَبَّةٌ تَبْعَثُ عَلَى إِيثَارِ الْحَقِّ عَلَى غَيْرِهِ، وَتُلْهِجُ اللِّسَانَ بِذِكْرِهِ. وَتُعَلِّقُ الْقَلْبَ بِشُهُودِهِ. وَهِيَ مَحَبَّةٌ تَظْهَرُ مِنْ:

The second level is a love that leads to favoring the True One over all else, keeps the tongue in constant remembrance of Him, and fixates the heart on beholding Him. It is a love that results from:

1. مُطَالَعَةِ الصِّفَاتِ
1. contemplating the attributes
2. beholding the signs[503]

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[500] The community of seekers.

[501] To that fraternity of seekers.

[502] *Wasâwis* could mean doubts or any thoughts competing with devotion to Allah.

[503] *'Ayât'* refers to both the verses of the Qur'an and universal signs.

3. observing the protocols of the stations[504]

2. وَالنَّظَرِ إِلَى الْآيَاتِ

3. وَالِارْتِيَاضِ بِالْمَقَامَاتِ

The third level is a captivating love that voids the expressions, refines the gestures,[505] and cannot be encompassed by attributes. It is the cornerstone of this matter, and all loves beneath it are [phenomena] spoken of by the tongues, claimed by the creations, and validated by the intellect.[506]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: مَحَبَّةٌ خَاطِفَةٌ تَقْطَعُ الْعِبَارَةَ، وَتُدَقِّقُ الْإِشَارَةَ، وَلَا تَنْتَهِي بِالنُّعُوتِ. وَهَذِهِ الْمَحَبَّةُ هِيَ قُطْبُ هَذَا الشَّأْنِ، وَمَا دُونَهَا مَحَابُّ نَادَتْ عَلَيْهَا الْأَلْسُنُ وَادَّعَتْهَا الْخَلِيقَةُ وَأَوْجَبَتْهَا الْعُقُولُ.

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504 As in the stations of this book.

505 No explicit speech may describe it, while symbolism may be refined by it.

506 The other types of love fall short of this one. They may be mere claims, and when they have realities, they are limited to the sphere of the intellect, which dictates that one love those who are kind to them.

Station 62: Protectiveness
al-Ghayrah (الْغَيْرَة)

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى - حَاكِيًا عَنْ نَبِيِّهِ سُلَيْمَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:
{رُدُّوهَا عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said— relating from His prophet, Sulaymân:

{[He said]:

Return them to me, and set about striking [their] legs and necks.}[507] *[Ṣâd 38:33]*

الْغَيْرَةُ سُقُوطُ الِاحْتِمَالِ ضَنًّا وَالضِّيقُ عَنِ الصَّبْرِ نَفَاسَةً. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Ghayrah (protectiveness)[508] refers to intolerance caused by concern[509] and impatience caused by keenness and competitiveness.[510] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: غَيْرَةُ الْعَابِدِ عَلَى ضَائِعٍ:
1. يَسْتَرِدُّ ضَيَاعَهُ
2. وَيَسْتَدْرِكُ فَوَاتَهُ

The first level is the *ghayrah* of the servant concerning that which was missed, to:

1. retrieve it

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[507] The verse was quoted here by the sheikh because Sulaymân's protectiveness of his relationship with Allah is what prompted him to sacrifice the horses after he was distracted by their beauty from his service. The other interpretation is that he wiped (not slashed) their legs and necks to show humility and regret before his Lord.

[508] *Ghayrah* is often translated as 'protective jealousy.'

[509] Intolerance of any barriers, distractions, or impediments in the way to Allah.

[510] Not allowing oneself to be beaten to Allah by others.

2. make up for missing it[511] .3 وَيَتَدَارَكُ تُوَاهُ

3. mitigate the consequences of its loss

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: غَيْرَةُ الْمُرِيدِ. وَهِيَ غَيْرَةٌ عَلَى وَقْتٍ فَاتَ. وَهِيَ غَيْرَةٌ قَاتِلَةٌ. فَإِنَّ الْوَقْتَ:

The second level is the *ghayrah* of the seeker, and it is concerning time lost.[512] It is a lethal *ghayrah*, for time is:

1. quick to lapse[513] .1 وَحِيُّ الْغَضَبِ
2. difficult to manage .2 أَبِيُّ الْجَانِبِ
3. slow to return[514] .3 بَطِيُّ الرُّجُوعِ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: غَيْرَةُ الْعَارِفِ عَلَى:

The third level is a *ghayrah* of the *'ârif*[515] concerning:

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[511] The difference between this and the previous point is that sometimes there is no way to make up for certain deeds, so one must compensate in other ways for missing them. The person would also have to compensate for committing sins or improprieties.

[512] For the seekers regret not only the deeds missed or inequities committed, but the breaths spent in other than the pursuit of His pleasure.

[513] The sheikh said, 'quick to lapse' in some manuscripts, but in this manuscript, he said, 'quick to get angry,' which means temperamental but would ultimately mean the same thing as 'quick to lapse.'

[514] Not that time would return, but the state that one descended from when he or she lost that time.

[515] Could be translated as 'gnostic' but due to some negative and irrelevant connotations to this word in English, I prefer to use the Arabic original, which means 'knower.' In the terminology of the masters of the path, it means the possessor of the inner knowledge of the heart that is pure, beneficial, and reformative.

1. eyesight[516] covered by a veil

2. an inner state obscured by a smudge

3. a breath that clung to hope or looked for prizes[517]

1. عَيْنٍ غَطَّاهَا غَيْنٌ

2. وَسِرٍّ غَشِيَهُ رَيْنٌ

3. وَنَفْسٍ عَلِقَ بِرَجَاءٍ، أَوِ الْتَفَتَ إِلَى عَطَاءٍ

[516] Some of the truths of faith that were clear to them, like the clarity of eyesight.

[517] Whereas its main focus should have been the pleasure of its Lord and His love.

Station 63: Yearning
ash-Shawq (الشَّوْقُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{مَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ اللهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللهِ لَآتٍ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{Whoever should hope for the meeting with Allah— indeed, the term decreed by Allah is coming...} *[al-'Ankaboot 29:5]*

الشَّوْقُ هُبُوبُ الْقَلْبِ إِلَى غَائِبٍ. وَفِي مَذْهَبِ هَذِهِ الطَّائِفَةِ، عِلَّةُ الشَّوْقِ عَظِيمَةٌ، فَإِنَّ الشَّوْقَ إِنَّمَا يَكُونُ إِلَى الْغَائِبِ. وَمَذْهَبُ هَذِهِ الطَّائِفَةِ إِنَّمَا قَامَ عَلَى الْمُشَاهَدَةِ. وَلِهَذِهِ الْعِلَّةِ لَمْ يَنْطِقِ الْقُرْآنُ بِاسْمِهِ. ثُمَّ هُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Yearning is the gusting[518] of the heart towards someone absent. To this community, the defect in yearning is enormous, because yearning is for someone absent, but the path of this community is based on beholding (Him). For this defect, the Qur'an did not mention *'ash-shawq.'* [519] It is of three levels:

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[518] The following words could also be used: 'rushing,' 'gushing,' or 'stirring.'

[519] The sheikh differentiates between *ash-shawq* (yearning) and *ar-rajâ'* (hope), which is why he says the Qur'an did not mention *ash-shawq* but started this station by quoting a verse about *ar-rajâ'* (hope) instead. The *Sunnah* did mention *ash-shawq*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to supplicate to Allah and say:
"... وَأَسْأَلُكَ لَذَّةَ النَّظَرِ إِلَى وَجْهِكَ وَالشَّوْقَ إِلَى لِقَائِكَ فِي غَيْرِ ضَرَّاءَ مُضِرَّةٍ وَلاَ فِتْنَةٍ مُضِلَّةٍ..."

"...I ask You for the sweetness of looking upon Your face and a longing to meet You in a manner that does not entail a calamity that

The yearning of the servant for paradise, for:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى شَوْقُ الْعَابِدِ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ،

1. the fearful to find security
2. the distressed to find joy
3. the hopeful to find their goal

1. لِيَأْمَنَ الْخَائِفُ
2. وَيَفْرَحَ الْحَزِينُ
3. وَيَظْفَرَ الْآمِلُ

The yearning for Allah, which is sown by the love that grows on the banks of the bounties, so the heart clings to His holy attributes, then yearns for His kind generosity, the exhibitions of His bounteousness, and the garlands of His graciousness. It is a yearning that is:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ شَوْقٌ إِلَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ زَرَعَهُ الْحُبُّ الَّذِي يَنْبُتُ عَلَى حَافَّاتِ الْمِنَنِ فَعَلِقَ قَلْبُهُ بِصِفَاتِهِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ فَاشْتَاقَ إِلَى مُعَايَنَةِ لِطَائِفِ كَرَمِهِ وَآيَاتِ بِرِّهِ وَأَعْلَامِ فَضْلِهِ. وَهَذَا شَوْقٌ:

1. eased by bounties[520]
2. mixed with joys[521]
3. mitigated by patience[522]

1. تَفْنَاهُ الْمَبَارُ
2. وَتُخَالِجُهُ الْمَسَارُ
3. ويقاويه الِاصْطِبَارْ

The third level is a fire that is kindled by the purity of love; it:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ نَارٌ أَضْرَمَهَا صَفْوُ الْمَحَبَّةِ،

1. spoils living[523]

1. فَنَغَّصَتِ الْعَيْشَ

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will bring about harm, or a trial that will cause deviation..." (an-Nasâ'i)

There is still a difference between beholding the Lord in this world and in the hereafter.

[520] The bounties of Allah become like advance payments, thus easing the heat of yearning.

[521] This mixing with the joys of Allah's favors, although permissible, detracts from yearning and may cause distraction, so one must stay watchful.

[522] One can still handle this longing with patience.

2. eliminates solace .2 وَسَلَبَتِ السَّلْوَةُ

3. and nothing calms it short of the meeting[524] .3 وَلَمْ يُنَهْنِهْهَا مِنْ دُونَ اللِّقَاءِ

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[523] Sufyân ath-Thawri said that he welcomed death out of fear of *fitnah*, and Yoosuf ibn Asbâṭ remarked that he favored to live—perhaps he would be guided to sincere repentance. Wuhayb ibn al-Ward said, "Whatever is more beloved to Allah is more beloved to me." If He chooses for us to live longer, we make the best of that opportunity to sow the seeds of goodness that we will harvest in the hereafter; if he chooses for us to depart earlier, then we should be ready and accepting.

[524] The meeting with the Beloved (Exalted is He).

Station 64: Anxiety
al-Qalaq (الْقَلَقُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said—relating from Moosâ:

{... and I hastened to You, my Lord, that You be pleased.} *[Ṭâ-Hâ 20:84]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَاكِيًا عَن مُوْسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ:

{وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى}.

Anxiety refers to the stirring of yearning *(ash-shawq)* by relinquishing patience.[525] It is of three levels:

الْقَلَقُ تَحْرِيكُ الشَّوْقِ بِإِسْقَاطِ الصَّبْرِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is an anxiety that:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى قَلَقٌ:

1. makes one's character difficult[526]
2. makes people dislikeable[527]

1. يُضَيِّقُ الْخُلُقَ
2. وَيُبَغِّضُ الْخَلْقَ

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[525] This is a heightened sense of yearning for Allah that will make one anxious, causing him or her to sometimes exhibit the symptoms of that anxiety in their conduct and dealings with people.

[526] Because the anxious person will find it hard to be agreeable with people. This may result, at times, in roughness or what may be perceived as such. However, we are instructed to maintain excellent character with people, so the feelings should be tempered by willful compliance with Divine instruction.

[527] Because the anxious person will not share much in common with them. In his early days, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be pleased with him) would go out to the desert and recite the poem of Laylâ's lover (but addressing Allah instead):

وَأَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْبُيُوتِ لَعَلَّنِي ... أُحَدِّثُ عَنْكَ النَّفْسَ بِالسِّرِّ خَالِيًا

"I come out to the wilderness so that I may...talk to myself about you in privacy."

3. makes (the notion of) death delightful — 3. وَيُلَذِّذُ الْمَوْتَ

The second level is an anxiety that: — والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ قَلَقٌ:

1. contends with reason[528] — 1. يُغَالِبُ الْعَقْلَ
2. deafens the ears[529] — 2. وَيُخَلِّي السَّمْعَ
3. overwhelms endurance[530] — 3. وَيُطَاوِلُ الطَّاقَةَ

The third level is an anxiety that: — والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ قَلَقٌ:

1. never shows mercy[531] — 1. لَا يَرْحَمُ أَبَدًا
2. never recognizes limits or terms[532] — 2. وَلَا يَقْبَلُ أَمَدًا
3. never spares anyone[533] — 3. وَلَا يُبْقِي أَحَدًا

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[528] Wanting to snatch it away from the reality of his or her worldly existence. It must be said that the best of this nation maintained their awareness of reality and engaged it in a way most pleasing to their Lord, to realize the good of the creation while seeking the ultimate good: devotion to God. Sobriety will always be better than intoxication. Also, intoxication is not a necessary bridge to sobriety in the presence of the Divine.

[529] Thus, the anxious one may not hear except that which he or she is longing for.

[530] The power of patience cannot calm that anxiety.

[531] Which means it is an overpowering, irresistible anxiety that gives the anxious no break.

[532] The anxiety cannot be constrained, moderated, mitigated, and it will never cease.

[533] All will vanish in the consciousness of the anxious one, including their own self.

Station 65: Thirst
al-'Aṭash (الْعَطَشُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said—relating from His *khaleel* (intimate friend), Ibrâheem (peace be upon him):

{So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said: This is my lord...} *[al-An'âm 6:76]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَاكِيًا عَن خَلِيلِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ:
{فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي}.

'Thirst' is a metaphor for the overwhelming craving for a goal. It is of three levels:

The first level is the thirst of the seeker for:

1. a quenching witness[534]
2. a curing allusion[535]
3. an empathic gesture to bring them closer[536]

The second level is the thirst of the

الْعَطَشُ كِنَايَةٌ عَنْ غَلَبَةِ وَلُوعٍ بِمَأْمُولٍ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى عَطَشُ الْمُرِيدِ إِلَى:

1. شَاهِدٍ يُرْوِيهِ
2. أَو إِشَارَةٍ تَشْفِيهِ
3. أَوْ عَطْفَةٍ تُؤْوِيهِ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: عَطَشُ

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[534] Signs that corroborate their faith and assure them about the path they are on and the state they are in.

[535] The hints that come to them from a guide or a companion on the path; they find a cure in them from interferences and hesitations that can bewilder the hearts. They may also find those cures in a verse they understand, a *ḥadeeth*, or a report about those who preceded us on the path of purification.

[536] By the Divine, that will bring them closer to Him.

traveler for:

السَّالِكِ إِلَى:

1. a term to be finished[537]

1. أَجَلٍ يَطْوِيهِ

2. a day that brings about fulfilment[538]

2. وَيَوْمٍ يُرِيهِ مَا يُغْنِيهِ

3. a station where they find comfort[539]

3. وَمَنْزِلٍ يَسْتَرِيحُ فِيهِ

The third level is the thirst of the lover for:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: عَطَشُ الْمُحِبِّ إِلَى:

1. clarity that is not screened by the clouds of defects,[540]

1. جَلْوَةٍ، مَا دُونَهَا سَحَابُ عِلَّةٍ

2. and is not covered by the veil of dispersion,[541]

2. وَلَا يُغَطِّيهَا حِجَابُ تَفْرِقَةٍ

3. and before and beyond which there is no quest[542]

3. وَلَا يُعَرَّجُ دُونَهَا عَلَى انْتِظَارٍ

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[537] A pursuit to be finished by accomplishing its goal, not necessarily the end of their lives.

[538] A traveler can find complete fulfillment only in their togetherness with Allah.

[539] One of the higher stations where he or she finds solace and *uns* (comforting intimacy).

[540] The darknesses of our faulty *nafs* obstruct us from beholding the Divine in this life.

[541] Being distracted by the multiplicity of things and phenomena from focusing on the True One.

[542] The sheikh (may Allah bestow mercy on him) means to say that this is a complete form of *shuhood* (beholding of the Divine), thus leaving no room for greater awareness of Him. However, the complete beholding of the Divine never happens to us in this life because of our defective nature. Even Moosâ (peace be upon him) was not granted the power to behold Him. In this life, we behold His

Station 66: Ecstasy
al-Wajd (الْوَجْدُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And We bound [made firm] their hearts when they stood up ...}[543] *[al-Kahf 18:14]*

قالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا}.

Wajd [544] is a flame that is ignited upon experiencing an unsettling encounter.[545] It is of three levels:

الْوَجْدُ: لَهَبٌ يَتَأَجَّجُ مِنْ شُهُودِ عَارِضٍ مُقْلِقٍ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

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signs until we reach a point where our recognition of Him by the heart becomes almost like seeing Him.

[543] The rest of the verse:

{...فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَن نَّدْعُوَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَٰهًا ۖ لَّقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا}

{...and said: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never will we invoke besides Him any deity. We would have certainly spoken, then, an excessive transgression.}

The sheikh meant to say that their rising or standing was caused by their intense spiritual experience.

[544] *'Wajd'* is a verbal noun from *'wajada'* (*lit.* found or experienced). It is usually translated as 'ecstasy.' Ecstasy is the result of the procurement/finding (*wajd*) of the causes of spiritual rapture: a jolt of spiritual energy that results in intense sensations. *Wajd* is encountered without invocation or expectation and causes varied effects that may include delight, grief, fear, contentment, or restlessness. If the attributes of His majesty are more prominent, fear will dominate the devotee. If the attributes of His beauty are more prominent, joy will dominate. It could also lead to some physical manifestations, such as rhythmic movements of the body or a perfect calm and peace.

The first level is a transient find that alerts the observant hearing, sight, and

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: وَجْدٌ عَارِضٌ يَسْتَفِيقُ لَهُ شَاهِدُ

It may lead to tears and *qash'areerah* (goose bumps, shivering of the skin), which Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said would result from *dhikr*. He added that those who are not moved at all by *dhikr* may suffer from hardness in their hearts. However, the sighs and passing out that were known among the *tâbi'een* is not the best state. The serenity of the *Ṣaḥâbah*, Ibn Taymiyyah contends, is superior and an indication of their perfect establishment in their spiritual stations. Allah said:

{اللهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللهِ}

{Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah...} *(az-Zumar 39:23)*

To invoke those spiritual states by dancing is an innovation that was never known among the righteous predecessors. *Tawâjud* (invoking *wajd*) is permissible if not done pretentiously but through the proper means of *dhikr*, recitation of the Qur'an, and reflection. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"إذا أُقِيمَتْ الصَّلَاةُ فلا تَأْتُوهَا تَسْعَوْنَ وَأْتُوهَا تَمْشُونَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّكِينَةُ والوَقَارُ فما أَدْرَكْتُمْ فَصَلُّوا وما فَاتَكُمْ فَأَتِمُّوا".

"When the *iqâmah* is called, do not run to the prayer, but proceed to it with tranquility and grace. Pray what you catch [with the congregation], and make up what you miss." (Agreed upon–from Abu Hurayrah)

545 Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him), clarifies in *Madârij* the reason for this definition. He elaborates that to the sheikh, *wajd* (procurement) is lower than *wujood* (actualization). It is an encounter that will alert the lover and point them to their Beloved, which will unsettle them until they actualize their transcendence to His holy presence.

reflection, whether it leaves a (lasting) impact on the one who experiences it or not.[546]

السَّمْعِ، أَوْ شَاهِدُ الْبَصَرِ، أَوْ شَاهِدُ الْفِكْرِ. أَبْقَى عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ أَثَرًا أَوْ لَمْ يُبْقِ.

The second level is a find that awakens the soul by the glow of the light of pre-eternity[547] or hearing the first call[548] or a Divine attraction (pull);[549] this would leave on the one who experiences it a (permanent) garb[550] or a guiding light.

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: وَجْدٌ تَسْتَفِيقُ لَهُ الرُّوحُ بِلَمْعِ نُورِ أَزَلِيٍّ، أَوْ سَمَاعِ نِدَاءٍ أَوَّلِيٍّ، أَوْ جَذْبٍ حَقِيقِيٍّ. إِنْ أَبْقَى عَلَى صَاحِبِهِ لِبَاسَهُ، وَإِلَّا أَبْقَى عَلَيْهِ نُورَهُ.

The third level is a find that snatches the servant from the grasp of the two

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: وَجْدٌ يَخْطِفُ الْعَبْدَ مِنْ يَدِ

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[546] It could be short-lived. However, if it is real and comes from the Divine, it will leave some good impact. This impact, however, may be overcome by other forces or heedlessness.

[547] Now the soul is the recipient of those finds. Unlike its devices—the hearing, sight, and intellect—it goes beyond the signposts to recognize the One to Whom they all point.

[548] This may refer to the activation of the pledge taken from our souls before they descended into the matter of our bodies. Allah said:

{وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا}

{And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them]: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we have testified...} *(al-A'râf 7:172)*

[549] Many people experience this when they are pulled from sin to obedience or from a station to a higher one.

[550] By making them established in one of the lofty stations.

worlds,[551] purifies him/her from the filth of self-interests, and releases him/her from the captivity of the water and soil; this would either make him/her forget his/her own name[552] or leave him/her a loaned form.[553]

الْكَوْنَيْنِ. وَيُمَحِّصُ مَعْنَاهُ مِنْ دَرَنِ الْحَظِّ وَيَسْلُبُهُ مِنْ رِقِّ الْمَاءِ وَالطِّينِ، إِنْ سَلَبَهُ أَنْسَاهُ اسْمَهُ. وَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْلُبْهُ أَعَارَهُ رَسْمَهُ.

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[551] This world and the hereafter. Meaning that one will be absorbed in their focus on the Lord alone.

[552] When the self dissolves into its Beloved. If the bearer of the name vanishes, the name vanishes with it.

[553] To the sheikh, this is a state lower than complete self-annihilation.

Station 67: Bewilderment
ad-Dahash (الدَّهَشْ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
{فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...So, as soon as they saw him, they were greatly (amazed) at him...}[554] *[Yoosuf 12:31]*

الدَّهَشُ بَهْتَةٌ تَأْخُذُ الْعَبْدَ عِنْدَ مُفَاجَأَةِ مَا يَغْلِبُ عَلَى عَقْلِهِ، أَوْ صَبْرِهِ، أَوْ عِلْمِهِ.
وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

Bewilderment is a shock that seizes the servant upon a surprising incident that overwhelms his/her intellect, his/her patience, or his/her knowledge.[555] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى دَهْشَةُ الْمُرِيدِ عِنْدَ صَوْلَةِ

The first level is the bewilderment of the *mureed* upon:

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[554] *'Dahash'* is the verbal noun of *'dahisha'* in the active voice or *'duhisha'* in the passive voice. Both mean that one became bewildered by the shock of an astonishing encounter. The word is not used in the Revelation. The sheikh cites this verse because the amazement of the women reported in this verse resulted in them cutting (wounding) their hands. The sheikh wants to address in this chapter the forceful impact of certain spiritual states that may lead to astonishment and bewilderment.

[555] In *Madârij*, Ibn al-Qayyim contends that while this state may incidentally occur on the path of devotion, its occurrence and continuity are not to be sought, nor is it a virtue in itself to be desired. Immersion in the *seerah* of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions demonstrates beyond doubt their sobriety at all times and grounded-ness in reality without this detracting from their exaltation of their Lord or unwavering pursuit of His pleasure.

1. the state overpowering his or her knowledge[556]
2. the ecstasy overpowering his/her tolerance[557]
3. the disclosure overpowering his/her drive[558]

1. الْحَالِ عَلَى عِلْمِهِ
2. وَالْوَجْدِ عَلَى طَاقَتِهِ
3. وَالْكَشْفِ عَلَى هِمَّتِهِ

The second level is the bewilderment of the traveler upon:

1. the union overpowering his/her identity[559]
2. the antecedence overpowering his/her time[560]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ دَهْشَةُ السَّالِكِ عِنْدَ صَوْلَةِ

1. الْجَمْعِ عَلَى رَسْمِهِ
2. وَالسَّبْقِ عَلَى وَقْتِهِ
3. وَالْمُشَاهَدَةِ عَلَى رُوحِهِ

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[556] While the apparent implication may be problematic, we assume that the sheikh did not intend to create a conflict between knowledge and one's spiritual state; they must complement rather than counter one another. The spiritual state may expose defective knowledge. However, the established *Shari'ah* must rule over one's interior and exterior and supersede one's intuitions. Its sovereignty is the distinction between the genuine seekers and the misguided or corrupt ones. If the spiritual state overwhelms one's knowledge—for instance, if they favor seclusion over the congregational prayer—the most that could be said about that person is that they may be excused, but the Revelation is the ultimate determinant of the rankings of deeds.

[557] He or she may scream or exhibit agitation if he/she was unable to maintain his/her composure.

[558] Because the disclosure brings near what was being sought by the drive.

[559] His or her togetherness with Allah will leave him/her numb to his/her own presence.

3. the beholding overpowering his/her soul[561]

The third level is the bewilderment of the lover upon:

1. the communion overpowering the favors[562]

2. the light of nearness overpowering the light of kindness[563]

3. the yearning of eyewitness overpowering the yearning that is a result of (hearing) reports[564]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ دَهْشَةُ الْمُحِبِّ عِنْدَ صَوْلَةِ

1. الِاتِّصَالِ عَلَى لُطْفِ الْعَطِيَّةِ

2. وَصَوْلَةِ نُورِ الْقُرْبِ عَلَى نُورِ الْعَطْفِ

3. وَصَوْلَةِ شَوْقِ الْعِيَانِ عَلَى شَوْقِ الْخَبَرِ

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[560] The antecedence of the First without beginning will make his/her time fade out.

[561] The soul may not bear with the beholding of the Beloved.

[562] The communion with Allah obscures the favors of Allah.

[563] Similar to the previous concept.

[564] The yearning that was caused by exposure to the reports (of the Revelation) is now surpassed by that which is caused by his/her own spiritual experience of the Divine.

Station 68: Mystification
al-Hayamân (الْهَيَمَان)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{...and Moosâ fell unconscious...} *[al-A'râf 7:143]*[565] {وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا}.

Mystification[566] is the loss of composure out of wonderment or الْهَيَمَانُ ذَهَابٌ عَنِ التَّمَاسُكِ تَعَجُّبًا أَوْ حَيْرَةً

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[565] In *Madârij*, Ibn al-Qayyim contends that this is not a station to be sought, but may be an incidental occurrence on the path. He argues that it has not been mentioned in the Qur'an or *Sunnah* or recognized by the earlier masters of the path.

The closest mention of a related word in the Qur'an was made in reference to the incoherence of the poets at the end of *Soorat ash-Shu'arâ'*.

{وَالشُّعَرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ * أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ}

{And the poets—[only] the deviators follow them; Do you not see that in every valley they roam/ wander[?]} *(ash-Shu'arâ' 26:224-225)*

While understanding these incidental occurrences may help us understand the spiritual topography of the path and find excuses for those who precede us on it, the ultimate role model is the Prophet ﷺ and the best generation is his Companions. They were fully aware of their reality and fully established in their spirituality.

[566] The root of this verbal noun is *'hâma'*, which means to be utterly confused, totally enthralled by the love of someone, or to wander around without direction. It describes someone who is semiconscious and numbed to the reality around them, as if they are in a different world.

puzzlement.[567] It is more enduring than *ad-dahash* (bewilderment) and more describable by the one who experiences it.[568] It is of three levels:

وَهُوَ أَثْبَتُ دَوَامًا، وَأَمْلَكُ لِلنَّعْتِ مِنَ الدَّهَشِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is a mystification that results from beholding the initial flashes of gentleness upon embarking on the journey, while being observant of one's despicable status, inferior ranking, and worthless value.[569]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى هَيَمَانٌ فِي شِيَمِ أَوَائِلِ بَرْقِ اللُّطْفِ عِنْدَ قَصْدِ الطَّرِيقِ، مَعَ مُلَاحَظَةِ الْعَبْدِ خِسَّةَ قَدْرِهِ، وَسَفَالَةَ مَنْزِلَتِهِ، وَتَفَاهَةَ قِيمَتِهِ.

The second level is a mystification by the battering of the waves of ascertainment upon:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ هَيَمَانٌ فِي تَلَاطُمِ أَمْوَاجِ التَّحْقِيقِ، عِنْدَ

1. the manifestation of its proofs
2. the successiveness of its wonders
3. the appearance of its lights[570]

1. ظُهُورِ بَرَاهِينِهِ
2. وَتَوَاصُلِ عَجَائِبِهِ

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[567] Wondering at the spiritual imports they encounter and being surprised by them.

[568] Because it is longer lasting and more stable than *ad-dahash*, the one who experiences it can describe it.

[569] Not seeing themselves qualified to be recipients of God's gentleness and graciousness after taking a few steps on the road to Him, they become delighted by those favors. In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim points out that the fruits of observing one's lowliness and the graciousness of their Lord are numerous and magnificent, such as the qualities of humbleness, gratefulness, rejoicing in His mercy, devotion, love, and so on.

[570] This level takes place when one starts to advance in their journey, whereby their certitude increases and experiential faith

3. وَلِيَاحِ أَنْوَارِهِ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ هَيَمانٌ عِنْدَ

1. الْوُقُوعِ فِي عَيْنِ الْقِدَمِ

2. وَمُعَايَنَةِ سُلْطَانِ الْأَزَلِ

3. وَالْغَرَقِ فِي بَحْرِ الْكَشْفِ

The third level is a mystification that occurs upon:

1. dissolving into [His] antecedence[571]
2. beholding the sovereignty of pre-eternity[572]
3. drowning in the ocean of disclosure[573]

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develops to an extent that they become mystified by the successiveness of manifest evidences bolstering their faith and tearing their veils.

[571] His absolute anteriorness; being unpreceded by anything and preceding everything. Reflecting on this enough should make one's will dissolve into His will and make Him the focus of one's attention, where the self becomes almost completely absorbed into this focus.

[572] Making the *ḥawâdith* (created things), in comparison, fade out from one's beholding.

[573] Disclosure of the True One to the eyes of the heart until you worship Him as if you see Him.

Station 69: Lightning
al-Barq (البَرْق)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا}.

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{When he saw a fire...}[574] *[Ṭâ-Hâ 20:10]*

الْبَرْقُ بَاكُورَةٌ تَلْمَعُ لِلْعَبْدِ، فَتَدْعُوهُ إِلَى الدُّخُولِ فِي هَذا الطَّرِيقِ. وَالْفَرْقُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْوَجْدِ أَنَّ الْوَجْدَ يَقَعُ بَعْدَ الدُّخُولِ فِيهِ، وَالْبَرْقُ قَبْلَهُ، فَالْوَجْدُ زَادٌ، وَالْبَرْقُ إِذْنٌ. وَهُوَ ثَلَاثُ دَرَجَاتٍ:

Lightning *(barq)* is an initial spark that invites the servant to set out on this road.[575] The difference between it and *wajd* (ecstasy) is that *wajd* occurs after embarking on the path, while *barq* occurs before it. Thus, *wajd* is a sustenance and *barq* is a permission. It is of three levels:

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[574] This is in reference to the fire seen by Moosâ (peace be upon him) on his way back from Madyan to Egypt. This marked the beginning of his prophethood. The sheikh uses the verse at the beginning of this chapter to say that the lightning (*barq*) marks the beginning of one's *walâyah* (intimate friendship).

[575] Every great move in one's life is induced by a great influence. Taking the road to devotion and purification is inspired by an invitation from Allah. That invitation could be in the form of a transformative experience that enlightens the heart and guides the soul. It could be as brief as lightning. One must be careful not to miss these opportunities. Allah said:

{وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ}

{And We will turn away their hearts and their eyes just as they refused to believe in it the first time...} *(al-An'âm 6:110)*

The first level is lightning that glows from promises for the hopeful,[576] thereby the servant finds:

1. little favors plentiful
2. large burdens light
3. sour destinies sweet

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: بَرْقٌ يَلْمَعُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الْعِدَةِ فِي عَيْنِ الرَّجَاءِ:

1. فَيَسْتَكْثِرُ فِيهِ الْعَبْدُ الْقَلِيلَ مِنَ الْعَطَاءِ
2. وَيَسْتَقِلُّ فِيهِ الْكَثِيرَ مِنَ الْأَعباءِ
3. وَيَسْتَحْلِي فِيهِ مَرَارَةَ الْقَضَاءِ

The second level is lightning that sparks from threats for the vigilant;[577] thereby the servant:

1. finds all hopes short
2. grows disinterested in people despite their closeness
3. desires to purify the innermost self

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: بَرْقٌ يَلْمَعُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الْوَعِيدِ فِي عَيْنِ الْحَذَرِ:

1. فَيَسْتَقْصِرُ فِيهِ الْعَبْدُ الطَّوِيلَ مِنَ الْأَمَلِ
2. وَيَزْهَدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ عَلَى الْقُرْبِ
3. وَيَرْغَبُ فِي تَطْهِيرِ السِّرِّ

The third level is lightning that glows from kindness for the broken,[578] thereby:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: بَرْقٌ يَلْمَعُ مِنْ جَانِبِ اللُّطْفِ فِي عَيْنِ الِافْتِقَارِ:

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[576] This is the diligent servant working for the promised rewards. Their certainty in His promises and their *rajâ'* (hope) make them acknowledge all His bounties, belittle all their efforts, and accept all His destinies.

[577] This is the servant who fears the approaching of death and punishment and fears that their deeds are not devoted and their hearts are not pure. They are always on alert, hurrying to purify their interiors before the time of meeting their Lord arrives.

1. generating clouds of joy .1 فَيُنْشِئُ سَحَابَ السُّرُورِ

2. bringing down showers of euphoria .2 وَيُمْطِرُ قَطْرَ الطَّرَبِ

3. causing the rivers of pride to flow[579] .3 وَيُجْرِي نَهْرَ الِافْتِخَارِ

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[578] This is the one who came to the Lord counting on nothing other than their brokenness. When He accepted them, they started to experience His gentleness and graciousness.

[579] This is not the pride of the arrogant, but the broken. Allah said:

{قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ}

{Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy—in that let them rejoice...} *(Yoonus 10:58)*

Station 70: Taste
adh-Dhawq (الذَّوْقِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{This is a reminder....} *[Ṣâd 38:49]* .{هَذَا ذِكْرٌ}

Dhawq (taste) is more permanent than *wajd* (ecstasy) and clearer than *barq* (lightning).[580] It is of three levels: الذَّوْقُ أَبْقَى مِنَ الْوَجْدِ وَأَجْلَى مِنَ الْبَرْقِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the believer tasting the savor of the promises, thereby: الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى ذَوْقُ التَّصْدِيقِ طَعْمَ الْعِدَةِ:

1. doubts do not restrain it (belief)[581] .1 فَلَا يَعْقِلُهُ ظَنٌّ

.2 وَلَا يَقْطَعُهُ أَمَلٌ

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[580] The heart tastes concepts and abstractions like the tongue tastes flavors. The heart that tasted the Truth and experienced its wonders is not like the heart that realized it only through intellectual inquiry. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"ذَاقَ طَعْمَ الإِيمَانِ مَنْ رَضِيَ بِاللهِ رَبًّا وَبِالإِسْلاَمِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولاً"

"He has tasted the savor of faith *(eemân)* who is content with Allah as his Lord, with Islam as his religion, and with Muhammad as his Prophet." (Muslim)

Tasting faith is more than believing in the truth of the Messenger ﷺ. Contentment is not only about belief or acceptance. One needs that basic belief and acceptance to be Muslim. Those who taste faith are above that. Taste is clear and permanent. Tasting the ultimate Truth makes the person capable of tasting the truths of the Revelation and of this world. While their taste will never be a substitute for the knowledge of *Shari'ah*, it refines their understanding of it.

[581] Heraclius said to Abu Sufyân, concerning the Prophet ﷺ:

2. hopes do not interrupt it
3. wishes do not impede it[582]

3. وَلَا تَعُوقُهُ أُمْنِيَّةٌ

The second level is the tasting of comforting intimacy *(uns)* by the will, thereby:

1. it does not get tethered by any diversion,
2. or corrupted by any interferences,
3. or spoiled by any dispersion *(tafriqah)*[583]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ ذَوْقُ الْإِرَادَةِ طَعْمَ الْأُنْسِ:

1. فَلَا يَعْلَقُ بِهِ شَاغِلٌ
2. وَلَا يُفْسِدُهُ عَارِضٌ
3. وَلَا تُكَدِّرُهُ تَفْرِقَةٌ

The third level:

1. the disconnected tasting connectedness
2. the one with great resolve tasting togetherness (with the Divine)
3. tasting the beholding [of the Divine] during soft conversation

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ:

1. ذَوْقُ الِانْقِطَاعِ طَعْمَ الِاتِّصَالِ
2. وَذَوْقُ الْهِمَّةِ طَعْمَ الْجَمْعِ
3. وَذَوْقُ الْمُسَامَرَةِ طَعْمَ الْعِيَانِ

"وَسَأَلْتُكَ هَلْ يَرْتَدُّ أَحَدٌ سَخْطَةً لِدِينِهِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِيهِ، فَزَعَمْتَ أَنْ لاَ، وَكَذَلِكَ الإِيمَانُ حِينَ تُخَالِطُ بَشَاشَتُهُ الْقُلُوبَ، لاَ يَسْخَطُهُ أَحَدٌ."

"I further asked you whether there was anybody who, after embracing his religion, left it out of resentment. You replied in the negative, and in fact, this is (a sign of) true faith. When its delight enters the heart and mixes with it, nobody will resent it thereafter." (Agreed upon)

582 From pursuing the ultimate goal they believe in.

583 When the multiplicity of creations and events distracts one from the oneness of the Creator.

SECTION VIII: THE SANCTITIES

AL-WALÂYÂT (الوَلَايَات)

The section on the sanctities is composed of ten stations:	وأما قِسْمُ الوَلَايَاتِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. noting	1. اللَحْظ
2. timeliness	2. والوَقْت
3. clarity	3. والصَفاء
4. bliss	4. والسُرُور
5. privacy	5. والسِرّ
6. breath	6. والنَفَس
7. stranger-ness	7. والغُرْبَة
8. absorption	8. والغَرَق
9. absence	9. والغَيْبَة
10. establishment	10. والتَمَكُن

Station 71: Noting
al-Laḥdh (اللَّحْظ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.} *[al-A'râf 7: 143]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:

{انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي}

Laḥdh (noting) is a stealthy glimpse.[584] In this respect, it is of three levels:

اللَّحْظُ لَمْحٌ مُسْتَرِقٌ. وَهُوَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is noting the antecedence of grace;[585] it:

1. interrupts supplications, except to show humility due to His Lordship[586]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: مُلَاحَظَةُ الْفَضْلِ سَبْقًا، وَهِيَ:

1. تَقْطَعُ طَرِيقَ السُّؤَالِ، إِلَّا مَا اسْتَحَقَّتْهُ الرُّبُوبِيَّةُ مِنْ إِظْهَارِ التَّذَلُّلِ لَهَا

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[584] This is about the ability of the observant heart to quickly reap the benefits of its observations. Since the ultimate object of one's observation is the Divine, the glimpses are stealthy out of reverence.

[585] His grace precedes any action on our part. He decreed all of the blessings one will be granted before their creation.

[586] When one realizes the antecedence of His grace, they will busy themselves with praising Him rather than asking Him, and they will realize that their petitions are not the ultimate cause of the blessings, but His antecedent grace is. The sheikh cautions, though, that we must continue to invoke His blessings as a response to His call and a show of humility. Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates in *Madârij* on the importance of supplication; he points out that supplication was ordained by Allah to cause its blessings, for He is the Creator of the

2. cultivates joy, except that it is mixed with concern about [His] plots[587]

3. motivates gratefulness, except that which is the prerogative of the True One[588]

2. وَتُثْبِتُ السُّرُورَ، إِلَّا مَا يَشُوبُهُ مِنْ حَذَرِ الْمَكْرِ

3. وَتَبْعَثُ عَلَى الشُّكْرِ إِلَّا مَا قَامَ بِهِ الْحَقُّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ حَقِّ الصِّفَةِ

The second level is noting the light of disclosure; it:

1. bolsters the bond[589]

2. permits one to taste the

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: مُلَاحَظَةُ نُورِ الْكَشْفِ، وَهِيَ:

1. تُسْبِلُ لِبَاسَ التَّوَلِّي

2. وَتُذِيقُ طَعْمَ التَّجَلِّي

3. وَتَعْصِمُ مِنْ عَوَارِ

---

cause and the effect. He also says that being busy with His praise may at times keep one from asking for their needs. However, this is a transient state, not a permanent station; one must continue to feel their poverty and need for Allah and ask Him for all their needs. The Prophet ﷺ said:

" مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللهَ يَغْضَبْ عَلَيْهِ."

"Indeed, [if a person] does not ask Allah, He gets angry with him." (at-Tirmidhi, from Abu Hurayrah)

587 The joy that is not mixed with concern about the possible reversal of the blessings and deprivation of good is a catalyst of heedlessness and tyranny. Allah said:

{ذَٰلِكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ.}

{[The angels will say]: That [punishment] was because you used to exult upon the earth without right and you used to behave insolently.} *(Ghâfir 40: 75)*

588 No one can show the necessary gratefulness to Allah except Him. Our gratefulness is merely a gift from Him that calls for more gratefulness.

589 The alliance with Allah and being attached to Him, detached from all else.

[Divine] appearances[590] التَّسَلِّي

3. protects one from the flaw of consolation[591]

The third level is noting the essence of union;[592] it: وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: مُلَاحَظَةُ عَيْنِ الْجَمْعِ، وَهِيَ:

1. awakens one to the insignificance of striving[593] 1. تُوقِظُ لِاسْتِهَانَةِ الْمُجَاهَدَاتِ

---

590 The manifestation of the Divine attributes and actions to the contemplative heart.

591 When one finds consolation in life away from his Beloved, God.

592 Togetherness with the Divine.

593 This could mean that one who reaches that state of togetherness with Allah finds all endeavors for His pleasure easy. It may also mean that those bodily endeavors become secondary to the heart's conformity to the Divine will and decree. The way this should be understood is that these people recognize the importance of the state of the heart and will not rely mainly on the efforts of the body. However, they will never cease to comply with the commands of their Lord and adhere to the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, who never abandoned the worship of His Lord by his interior and exterior until certainty came to him, and neither did his Companions. Allah said:

{وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ.}.

{And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death).} *(al-Ḥijr 15: 99)*

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in *Madârij* many statements from the masters of the path of *taṣawwuf* emphasizing the importance of compliance with *Shari'ah* and adherence to the Sunnah for all worshipers until their death.

2. rids one from the imprudence of objections[594] .2 وَتُخَلِّصُ مِنْ رُعُونَةِ الْمُعَارَضَاتِ

3. allows one to behold the beginnings[595] .3 وَتُفِيدُ مُطَالَعَةَ الْبِدَايَاتِ

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[594] One may not object to His creative or prescriptive decrees. The latter is treated with compliance and the first is treated with acceptance. If the creative and prescriptive decrees are in harmony, such as in the case of one who fasts in Ramadan and feeds the orphans, such acts should be commended and supported. If they are not in harmony, such as in the case of one who oppresses the weak and withholds *zakât*, such acts should be denounced and resisted, for the prescriptive decrees are what we have been commanded to follow.

[595] Ibn al-Qayyim suggests in *Madârij* that this may refer to the antecedence of Allah before all things or the time of the servant first embarking on the path to Allah. This is a time of focus and zeal that is often missed and reminisced about by the seekers during their travel, regardless of their stations.

Station 72: Timeliness
al-Waqt (الْوَقْتُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وجَلَّ:
{ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَى قَدَرٍ يَا مُوسَى}

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...Then you came [here] at the decreed time, O Moosâ.} *[Ṭâ Hâ 20: 40]*[596]

الْوَقْتُ اسْمٌ لِظَرْفِ الْكَوْنِ. وَهُوَ اسْمٌ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ لِثَلَاثَةِ مَعَانٍ، عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Al-waqt (time)[597] is a name for the temporal boundaries.[598] In this respect, it is a name for three meanings at three levels:

الْمَعْنَى الْأَوَّلُ: حِينَ وَجْدٍ صَادِقٍ:
1. لِإِينَاسِ ضِيَاءِ فَضْلٍ

The first meaning is (what takes place) during a true *wajd* (ecstasy/finding of spiritual rapture)

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[596] The reason the sheikh chose this verse is that it denotes that everything has a right time decreed.

[597] *Waqt* literally means 'time.' Here, it is about timeliness. It means many things in this regard: readiness and doing things at the right (most suitable) time; being true in living the present moment to the fullest extent, not allowing the past and future to distract you from it and capturing the most from it. In this path of *tazkiyah*, this is certainly not meant in a hedonistic sense, but rather in a devotional sense of excellence (*iḥsân*) in the service most suitable to that moment.

[598] Just like a place is a vehicle for matter, time is a vehicle for events. It is the relationship between two events. In the usage of *taṣawwuf*, it pertains to the current moment or state or the Divine schemes.

resulting from experiencing:

1. the glow of grace brought by pure hope
2. or the blow (of might) brought by true fear
3. or the heat of yearning brought by blazing love[599]

جَذْبَةُ صَفَاءُ رَجَاءٍ

2. أَوْ لِقَصْمَةٍ جَذْبَهَا صِدْقُ خَوْفٍ

3. أَوْ لِتَلَهُّبِ شَوْقٍ جَذْبَةُ اشْتِعَالُ مَحَبَّةٍ

The second meaning pertains to the path of a traveler moving between establishment and variability,[600] but they are closer to establishment, walking down the road of *ḥâl* (spiritual state) and paying attention to knowledge.[601] The knowledge occupies

وَالْمَعْنَى الثَّانِي: اسْمٌ لِطَرِيقِ سَالِكٍ يَسِيرُ بَيْنَ تَمَكُّنٍ وَتَلَوُّنٍ، لَكِنَّهُ إِلَى التَّمَكُّنِ مَا هُوَ يَسْلُكُ الْحَالَ، وَيَلْتَفِتُ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ. فَالْعِلْمُ يَشْغَلُهُ فِي حِينٍ، وَالْحَالُ يَحْمِلُهُ فِي حِينٍ. فَبَلَاؤُهُ بَيْنَهُمَا:

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[599] Notice how he makes the moment of the seeker at this level subject to the feelings of hope, fear, and love.

[600] Establishment refers to the state of togetherness with Allah and the beholding of the oneness of the Origin and the First Cause, the All-Powerful Controller of all things. The variability is the condition of one responding to the different requirements of the various times and the pertinent demands of those times.

[601] The sheikh means to say that the person destined to *tamkeen* cares more about their *ḥâl*. This meaning is valid. The *ḥâl* is the objective and *'ilm* is the tool. However, as Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) points out in *Madârij*, there is no need to create a conflict between the *ḥâl* and *'ilm*. While they are not synonymous or mutually inclusive, they are not in conflict either. Contrarily, the good *ḥâl* encourages the seeker to learn about their Lord and His pleasures, and the good *'ilm* motivates the seeker to watch their

them at times, and the *ḥâl* carries them at times. Their dilemma between them causes them to:

1. taste *shuhood*[602] at one phase
2. become engrossed in jealousy at another[603]
3. see the smudge of dispersion at yet another phase[21]

1. يُذِيقُهُ شُهُودًا طَوْرًا
2. وَيَكْسُوهُ غَيرَةً طَوْرًا
3. وَيُرِيهِ غَبْرَةَ تَفَرُّقٍ طَوْرًا

The third meaning: they [the masters of *taṣawwuf*] said, "Time is the True One." They meant by that the absorption of the form of time into the reality of the True One. To me, this meaning is too difficult to be applied to this name. However, in this third sense, it is a name for the vanishing of forms: not in reality, but in disclosure (perception).[604] It is above lightning and *wajd* (ecstasy/finding of spiritual rapture). It would approach the station

وَالْمَعْنَى الثَّالِثُ، قَالُوا: "الْوَقْتُ الْحَقُّ." أَرَادُوا بِهِ: اسْتِغْرَاقَ رَسْمِ الْوَقْتِ فِي وُجُودِ الْحَقِّ. وَهَذَا الْمَعْنَى يَشُقُّ عَلَى هَذَا الِاسْمِ عِنْدِي. لَكِنَّهُ هُوَ اسْمٌ فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى الثَّالِثِ لِحِينٍ تَتَلَاشَى فِيهِ الرُّسُومُ كَشْفًا، لَا وُجُودًا مَحْضًا.

وَهُوَ فَوْقُ الْبَرْقِ وَالْوَجْدِ. وَهُوَ يُشَارِفُ مَقَامَ الْجَمْعِ، لَوْ دَامَ وَبَقِيَ. وَلَا يَبْلُغُ وَادِيَ

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hearts, purify their interiors, and eagerly seek closeness to their Lord.

602 The beholding of the Divine appearances through the *tajalli* (manifestation) of His attributes and actions.

603 Jealousy of those who surpassed them in the *ḥâl*.

604 At this phase that the sheikh usually dedicates to annihilation of the ego, the moment vanishes when perceived in context of the eternity of the True One.

of union, if it were to continue. While it does not reach the valley of *wujood* (actuality),[605] it:

1. spares one the burdens of service[606]
2. purifies the intimate dialogue[607]
3. lets one smell the fragrance of *wujood* (actuality)[608]

الْوُجُودِ، لَكِنَّهُ

1. يَكْفِي مَؤُنَةَ الْمُعَامَلَةِ
2. وَيُصَفِّي عَيْنَ الْمُسَامَرَةِ
3. وَيُشِمُّ رَوَائِحَ الْوُجُودِ

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[605] A name for one of the higher stations where Reality is found in actuality.

[606] The correct way to understand this is that it makes the service light and enjoyable, not requiring endurance but giving energy and joy.

[607] Where one's ongoing dialogue with their Lord is not corrupted by any distractions.

[608] *Wujood* is Station 96 of this book.

Station 73: Clarity
aṣ-Ṣafâ' (الصَّفَاءُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And indeed they are, to Us, among the chosen and outstanding.} *[Ṣâd 38: 47]*[609]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ}

Aṣ-ṣafâ' is a word for clearance of any impurities. In this respect, it refers to the cessation of variability.[610] It is of three levels:

الصَّفَاءُ اسْمٌ لِلْبَرَاءَةِ مِنَ الْكَدَرِ. وَهُوَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ سُقُوطُ التَّلَوُّنِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the clarity of knowledge. It:

1. refines one for the journey
2. reveals the objective of striving
3. corrects the aspiration of the seeker

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: صَفَاءُ عِلْمٍ:

1. يُهَذِّبُ لِسُلُوكِ الطَّرِيقِ
2. وَيُبَصِّرُ غَايَةَ الْجِدِّ
3. وَيُصَحِّحُ هِمَّةَ الْقَاصِدِ

The second level is the clarity of the *ḥâl* (inner state), by which:

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: صَفَاءُ حَالٍ:

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609 Those who were chosen were purified of all impurities. The word used for 'chosen' in Arabic is *'muṣṭafayn,'* (pl. of *muṣṭafâ*), which comes from the same root as *aṣ-safâ'*. Those messengers were purified from attachments to other than Him and desires of other than His pleasure.

610 As discussed in the previous station, variable wants and occupations may smudge one's aspiration, drive, and intention and cause distraction and dispersion.

1. the fruition of realization is witnessed[611]

2. the sweetness of intimate dialogue is tasted

3. the world is forgotten

The third level is the clarity of connection, which:

1. subordinates the interest of servitude to the right of Lordship[612]

2. submerges the endings of (faith through hearing the) reports under the beginnings of (faith through) eye witnessing[613]

3. makes the lowliness of the burdens (of the injunctions) vanish into pre-eternity[614]

1. يُشَاهَدُ بِهِ شَوَاهِدُ التَّحْقِيقِ

2. وَيُذَاقُ بِهِ حَلَاوَةُ الْمُنَاجَاةِ

3. وَيُنْسَى بِهِ الْكَوْنُ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: صَفَاءُ اتِّصَالٍ:

1. يُدْرِجُ حَظَّ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ فِي حَقِّ الرُّبُوبِيَّةِ

2. وَيُغْرِقُ نِهَايَاتِ الْخَبَرِ فِي بِدَايَاتِ الْعِيَانِ

3. وَيَطْوِي خِسَّةَ التَّكَالِيفِ فِي عَيْنِ الْأَزَلِ

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611 The heart's realization of the Truth *(al-Ḥaqeeqah)* is abundantly fruitful. The fruition of that realization is called *taḥqeeq*.

612 The servant will not be thinking of compensation, but rather considering all they do as a deficient show of gratefulness to their Most Gracious Lord.

613 That is when the heart becomes certain of the revealed truth. Allah said:

{وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقَّ ...}

{And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth...} *(Saba' 34: 6)*

614 While uncomfortably ambiguous, Ibn al-Qayyim suggests in *Madârij* two ways to properly understand this. The sheikh may have meant that the worship of those who see the injunctions as burdens

Station 74: Bliss
as-Suroor (السُّرُورُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy—in that let them rejoice...} *[Yoonus 10: 58]*

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا}

As-suroor (bliss) is a name for complete cheerfulness *(istibshâr)*;[615] it is purer than *faraḥ* (joy), because *faraḥ* may be mixed with some grief, and that is why the Qur'an mentions *faraḥ* on different occasions concerning the joy of this world. However, *suroor* (bliss) is mentioned on two occasions in the Qur'an in reference to the state

والسُّرُورُ اسْمٌ لِاسْتِبْشَارٍ جَامِعٍ، وَهُوَ أَصْفَى مِنَ الْفَرَحِ، لِأَنَّ الْأَفْرَاحَ رُبَّمَا شَابَهَا الْأَحْزَانُ، وَلِذَلِكَ نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ بِاسْمِهِ فِي أَفْرَاحِ الدُّنْيَا فِي مَوَاضِعَ، وَوَرَدَ اسْمُ السُّرُورِ فِي الْمَوْضِعَيْنِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ فِي حَالِ الْآخِرَةِ. وَهُوَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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is a lowly form of worship. He may also have meant that the acts of the servant are lowly because of the servant's lowliness, and they only become noble when they are attributed to the Lord. The acts of one who sees their acts as their own will always be lowly, but one who sees them as the doing of the Pre-Eternal One will have cleared their acts of that lowliness.

[615] *Istibshâr* comes from the same root as *bushrâ* (glad tiding), so this bliss is mixed with optimism, positivity, and confidence about the future. It is felicity without worries. The source of confidence is our trust in Allah's graciousness, not our reliance on our deeds.

of (bliss in) the hereafter.[616] In this respect, it is of three levels:

The first level is the bliss of taste (of faith), which removes three types of grief:

1. that which is brought about by the fear of desertion[617]
2. that which is stirred by the darkness of ignorance
3. that which is covered by the lonesomeness of dispersion[618]

The second level is the bliss of *shuhood*,[619] which:

1. removes the veil of knowledge[620]
2. breaks the shackles of the burdens (of injunctions)[621]
3. ends the lowliness of

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى سُرُورُ ذَوْقٍ ذَهَبَ بِثَلَاثَةِ أَحْزَانٍ:

1. حُزْنٌ أَوْرَثَهُ خَوْفُ الِانْقِطَاعِ
2. وَحُزْنٌ هَاجَتْهُ ظُلْمَةُ الْجَهْلِ
3. وَحُزْنٌ أَغْشَتْهُ وَحْشَةُ التَّفَرُّقِ

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ سُرُورُ شُهُودٍ:

1. كَشَفَ حِجَابَ الْعِلْمِ
2. وَفَكَّ رِقَّ التَّكْلِيفِ
3. وَنَفَى صَغَارَ الِاخْتِيَارِ

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[616] Both *farah* and *suroor* are mentioned in negative and positive contexts in the Qur'an.

[617] Being left behind the caravan and cut off from God.

[618] Wholeness is achieved only in togetherness with the True and Holy One; any separation from Him and distraction by *as-siwâ* (anything else) causes the fragmentation of the soul and its diaspora.

[619] Beholding the Divine acts and graciousness.

[620] Knowledge of technicalities that is not accompanied by a good *ḥâl* can be an obstacle.

[621] They are not burdens anymore, but sources of joy and energy.

(entertaining) choices[622]

The third level is the bliss of hearing by the receptive, which:

1. eliminates the effects of lonesomeness
2. knocks on the gate of *mushâhadah*[623]
3. prompts the soul to laugh[624]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ سُرُورُ سَمَاعِ الْإِجَابَةِ، وَهُوَ سُرُورٌ:

1. يَمْحُو آثَارَ الْوَحْشَةِ
2. وَيَقْرَعُ بَابَ الْمُشَاهَدَةِ
3. وَيُضْحِكُ الرُّوحَ

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[622] In this ranking, one gives up their choice. Allah said:

{وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ....}

{It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair...} *(al-Aḥzâb 33: 36)*

[623] Unlike the previous level, the beholding here is of the Divine appearance *(tajalli)* through the manifestation of His names and attributes while in togetherness with Him.

[624] The laughing of the soul is an indication of its final and ultimate bliss. Allah said:

{وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ — ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ.}

{[Some] faces, that day, will be bright—laughing, rejoicing at good news.} *('Abasa 80: 38-39)*

Station 75: Privacy
as-Sirr (السِرّ)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{...Allah is most knowing of what is within their souls...}[625] *[Hood 11: 31]* {اللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ}

The private people[626] are the discreet ones about which accounts were reported.[627] They are of three tiers, at three levels: أَصْحَابُ السِرّ هُمُ الْأَخْفِيَاءُ الَّذِينَ وَرَدَ فِيهِمُ الْخَبَرُ، وَهُمْ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ طَبَقَاتٍ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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[625] Knowing what is in their hearts, He bestowed on them His greatest favor: guidance to faith.

[626] The literal translation of the Arabic original is "the possessors/keepers/people of the secret." It is these who are private in their relationship with Allah. They are discreet, inconspicuous, and unpretentious.

[627] The Prophet ﷺ said:

"إِنَّ اَللَّهَ يُحِبُّ اَلْعَبْدَ اَلتَّقِيَّ اَلْغَنِيَّ اَلْخَفِيَّ."

"Allah loves the pious, self-sufficient servant who is discreet." [Muslim, from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ.]

The Prophet ﷺ also was reported to have said:

"إِنَّ يَسِيرَ الرِّيَاءِ شِرْكٌ وَإِنَّ مَنْ عَادَى لِلَّهِ وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ بَارَزَ اللَّهَ بِالْمُحَارَبَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الأَبْرَارَ الأَتْقِيَاءَ الأَخْفِيَاءَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا غَابُوا لَمْ يُفْتَقَدُوا وَإِنْ حَضَرُوا لَمْ يُدْعَوْا وَلَمْ يُعْرَفُوا قُلُوبُهُمْ مَصَابِيحُ الْهُدَى يَخْرُجُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ غَبْرَاءَ مُظْلِمَةٍ."

"A little showing off (*riyâ'*) is polytheism (*shirk*); and whoever shows enmity towards a friend of Allah has declared war against Allah. Allah loves those who are righteous, pious, and discreet (unostentatious); those who, if they are absent, are not missed, and if they are present, they are not invited or acknowledged. Their

الطَبَقَةُ الأُولَى: طَائِفَةٌ عَلَتْ هِمَمُهُمْ، وَصَفَتْ قُصُودُهُمْ. وَصَحَّ سُلُوكُهُمْ. وَلَم يُوقَفْ لَهُمْ عَلَى رَسْمٍ. وَلَمْ يُنْسَبُوا إِلَى اسْمٍ. وَلَمْ يُشَرْ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالأَصَابِعِ. أُولَئِكَ ذَخَائِرُ اللهِ حَيْثُ كَانُوا.

The first tier: those people with high aspirations, pure intentions, and correct conduct. Their forms and footsteps cannot be traced,[628] they are not given any designations,[629] and they are not pointed out by the fingers.[630] They are truly Allah's stockpiles[631] wherever they are.

والطَبَقَةُ الثَانِيَةُ: طَائِفَةٌ أَشَارُوا عَنْ مَنْزِلٍ وَهُمْ فِي غَيْرِهِ، وَوَرَّوا بِأَمْرٍ وَهُمْ لِغَيْرِهِ، وَنَادَوْا عَلَى شَأْنٍ وَهُمْ عَلَى غَيْرِهِ فَهُمْ بَيْنَ غَيْرَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ تَسْتُرُهُمْ وَأَدَبٍ فِيهِمْ يَصُونُهُمْ وَظُرْفٍ يُهَذِّبُهُمْ.

The second tier: those who pointed out a station while they were in another, alluded to an affair while they embarked on another, and advocated for a matter while they entertained another.[632] They are between the cover of His protectiveness, the protection of

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hearts are lamps of guidance and they emerge (unscathed) from every dark and confounding (trial)." [Ibn Mâjah reported it from Mu'âdh ibn Jabal through a questionable chain.]

628 They are not bound by forms because they are after the realities. Also, because they are far ahead of others, their footsteps may no longer be traceable.

629 No titles, memberships, or allegiances other than to Allah, His Messenger ﷺ, and His chosen religion: Islam.

630 Because of their modesty and discreetness, they are not recognized by those around them.

631 The ones He elected and saved for Himself.

632 They actively hide their private *ḥâl* and relationship with their Lord.

their proper etiquette, and the refinement of their geniality.

The third tier: a group that the True One had hid them from them,[633] so He showed them a vision that made them too bewildered to recognize their state, and too mystified to behold what they had set out for,[634] and protected their inner state from their awareness of it,[635] so they became veiled from themselves, while witnessing signs of the uprightness of their station.[636] All this resulted from a pure intention stirred by an unseen goal, a true love hidden from the intellect, and a strange *wajd* (ecstasy) whose kindler is concealed. This is one of the finest stations of the

وَالطَّبَقَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: طَائِفَةٌ أَسْرَهُمُ الْحَقُّ عَنْهُمْ، فَأَلَاحَ لَهُمْ لَائِحًا أَذْهَلَهُمْ عَنْ إِدْرَاكِ مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَهَيَّمَهُمْ عَنْ شُهُودِ مَا هُمْ لَهُ، وَضَنَّ بِحَالِهِمْ عَنْ عِلْمِهِمْ مَا هُمْ بِهِ، فَاسْتَسَرُّوا عَنْهُمْ مَعَ شَوَاهِدَ تَشْهَدُ لَهُمْ بِصِحَّةِ مَقَامِهِمْ، عَنْ قَصْدٍ صَادِقٍ يُهَيِّجُهُ غَيْبٌ وَحُبٌّ صَادِقٌ يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ عِلْمُهُ، وَوَجْدٌ غَرِيبٌ لَا يَنْكَشِفُ لَهُ مُوقِدُهُ، وَهَذَا مِنْ أَرَقِّ مَقَامَاتِ أَهْلِ الْوِلَايَةِ.

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633 For they are too busy beholding Him to behold their deeds or states. They become unaware of themselves because of their absorption into the Divine. They neither perceive the people around them nor perceive themselves.

634 If they have intended to reach a certain station, now their focus is on Him alone so completely that they do not even remember what they set out for.

635 Your knowledge of your own state could impede your progress and delay your arrival by taking away from your focus on the goal: Divine pleasure.

636 Their adherence to the Sunnah never faltered and their compliance with the *Shari'ah* never waned.

people of *walâyah* (Allah's friendship).

Station 76: Breath
an-Nafas (النَّفَسُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And when he recovered, he said: Exalted are You!...}[637] *[al-A'râf 7: 143]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ

Nafas (breath)[638] is so called because the breather finds comfort in it.[639] It is of three levels; they resemble the levels of *waqt* (timeliness).[640] There are three breaths:

يُسَمَّى النَّفَسُ نَفَسًا لِتَرَوُّحِ الْمُتَنَفِّسِ بِهِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ، وَهِيَ تُشَابِهُ دَرَجَاتِ الْوَقْتِ. وَالْأَنْفَاسُ ثَلَاثَةٌ:

The first breath is a breath taken while being veiled.[641] It is full of turmoil

النَّفَسُ الْأَوَّلُ نَفَسٌ فِي حِينِ اسْتِتَارٍ مَمْلُوءٍ مِنَ

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[637] This station is about a breath/sigh the spirit takes on its way out from distress, in transit between two stations, or out of relief or joy. The verse talks about Prophet Moosâ's relief after he fell unconscious in shock when God manifested Himself to the mountain.

[638] May also be translated as sigh or respite.

[639] The three lettered root (ن - ف - س) usually infers relief after distress.

[640] The general resemblance between breath and *waqt* (timeliness/moment) is that our time is measured by our breaths. The specific resemblance is that both are contingent on transient *ḥâls* (inner states).

[641] The seeker was in a *ḥâl* or *maqâm* that has been concealed from them, so now they suffer the distress of their loss.

and associated with knowledge.[642] When the seeker breathes, it is with sorrow, and when he speaks, it is with sadness. In my opinion, it emanates from the lonesomeness of being veiled. It is the darkness that they consider to be a station.[643]

الْكَظْمِ، مُتَعَلِّقٍ بِالْعِلْمِ، إِنْ تَنَفَّسَ تَنَفَّسَ بِالْأَسَفِ، وَإِنْ نَطَقَ نَطَقَ بِالْحُزْنِ، وَعِنْدِي هُوَ مُتَوَلِّدٌ مِنْ وَحْشَةِ الِاسْتِتَارِ، وَهِيَ الظُّلْمَةُ الَّتِي قَالُوا إِنَّهَا مَقَامٌ.

The second breath is a breath taken while beholding the Divine appearance,[644] and it is a breath that is:

1. in the station of bliss looking up towards the liberation of eye witnessing[645]
2. full of the light of *wujood* (actuality)[646]

وَالنَّفَسُ الثَّانِي نَفَسٌ فِي حِينِ التَّجَلِّي، وَهُوَ نَفَسٌ:

1. شَاخِصٌ عَنْ مَقَامِ السُّرُورِ إِلَى رَوْحِ الْمُعَايَنَةِ
2. مَمْلُوءٌ مِنْ نُورِ الْوُجُودِ
3. شَاخِصٌ إِلَى مُنْقَطَعِ الْإِشَارَةِ

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[642] He or she has the knowledge which causes him/her to mourn the loss, but not the sweetness which would have given him/her contentment.

[643] The sheikh does not seem to consider this deprivation a station. Those of the masters who did may have meant, as Ibn al-Qayyim elucidates in *Madârij*, that it comes with many benefits. Among them are: not taking His gifts for granted; making the servant reliant only on His Lord, not his *'ilm* or *ḥâl*; and tasting the sourness of deprivation to later appreciate the sweetness of His grace.

[644] It is the appearance of the manifestations of the Divine attributes to the eyes of one's heart.

[645] This is still the witnessing of the Divine by the eyes of the heart. The *tajalli* of His attributes to the heart is not all equal. Eye witnessing is a phase when that *tajalli* becomes complete.

3. and looking up towards the cessation of all signals[647]

وَالنَّفَسُ الثَّالِثُ نَفَسٌ:

The third breath is a breath that is:

1. purified by the water of holiness[648]

1. مُطَهَّرٌ بِمَاءِ الْقُدْسِ،

2. subsisting by the scheme of pre-eternity[649]

2. قَائِمٌ بِإِشَارَاتِ الْأَزَلِ

3. the breath that is referred to as the pure light

3. وَهُوَ النَّفَسُ الَّذِي يُسَمَّى بِصِدْقِ النُّورِ

So, the first breath is a lamp for the diligent, the second is a stairway for the seeker, and the third is a crown for the actualizer.

فَالنَّفَسُ الْأَوَّلُ لِلْمُنِيبِ سِرَاجٌ، وَالثَّانِي لِلْقَاصِدِ مِعْرَاجٌ، وَالثَّالِثُ لِلْمُحَقِّقِ تَاجٌ.

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[646] *Wujood* is Station 96 of this book.

[647] To the sheikh, the cessation of all signals happens at the point of self-annihilation, where statements and even signals cannot describe one's experience.

[648] Purified from beholding the *siwâ* (other than God).

[649] This heart had left behind everything *muḥdath* (originated) and clung only to the pre-eternal.

Station 77: Stranger-ness
al-Ghurbah (الْغُرْبَةُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{So, if only there been of the generations even before you those of enduring discrimination forbidding corruption on earth—except a few of those We saved from among them?...}[650] *[Hood 11: 116]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُو بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ}

Stranger-ness refers to one's distinction from their peers. It is of three levels:

الِاغْتِرَابُ اُمْرٌ يُشَارُ بِهِ إِلَى الِانْفِرَادِ عَنِ الْأَكْفَاءِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is separation from the homelands. For this stranger:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الْغُرْبَةُ عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ، وَهَذَا الْغَرِيبُ:

1. their death is martyrdom[651]
2. they will have the distance between their homeland and their tomb measured in their grave[652]

1. مَوْتُهُ شَهَادَةٌ
2. وَيُقَاسُ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ مِنْ مَدْفَنِهِ إِلَى وَطَنِهِ
3. وَيُجْمَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

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[650] The verse talks about some qualities of the strangers: they are few, judicious, and they are not only upright, but they also forbid corruption.

[651] Referring to what has been reported in several hadiths with controversial authenticity.

[652] Referring to several hadiths, of which the most authentic is a hadith in which 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr said:

3. and they will be united on the day of resurrection with 'Eesâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (upon him be peace)[653]

إِلَى عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

The second level is the distinction of the *hâl*, and this stranger is of those promised blessedness. It is a righteous person in a corrupt time among corrupt people, or a scholar among ignorant people, or an honest person among hypocrites.

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: غُرْبَةُ الْحَالِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ الْغُرَبَاءِ الَّذِينَ طُوبَى لَهُمْ، وَهُوَ رَجُلٌ صَالِحٌ فِي زَمَانٍ فَاسِدٍ بَيْنَ قَوْمٍ فَاسِدِينَ، أَوْ عَالِمٌ بَيْنَ قَوْمٍ جَاهِلِينَ، أَوْ صِدِّيقٌ بَيْنَ قَوْمٍ مُنَافِقِينَ.

The third level is the distinction of resolve. This is the stranger-ness in pursuit of the True One. It is the

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: غُرْبَةُ الْهِمَّةِ، وَهِيَ غُرْبَةُ طَلَبِ الْحَقِّ، وَهِيَ غُرْبَةُ الْعَارِفِ؛ لِأَنَّ

"A man died in Madinah, and he was born in it. The Prophet ﷺ offered the funeral prayer for him and said, 'Would that he had died somewhere other than his birthplace.'

A man among the people asked, 'Why, O Messenger of Allah?'

He said:

'إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ إِذَا مَاتَ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْلِدِهِ قِيسَ لَهُ مِنْ مَوْلِدِهِ إِلَى مُنْقَطَعِ أَثَرِهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ.'

'When a man dies somewhere other than his birthplace, a space will be measured for him in Paradise (as big as the distance) from the place where he was born to the place where he died.'" (Reported by an-Nasâ'i and Ibn Mâjah with a controversial chain that was authenticated by some)

and may be an encouragement for people to seek what is good for them in their life and the hereafter wherever it may be.

[653] Referring to another hadith that is graded weak by the scholars of hadith. Out of the five messengers with great resolve, 'Eesâ (upon him be peace) had the fewest disciples.

الْعَارِفَ فِي شَاهِدِهِ غَرِيبٌ، وَمَصْحُوبَهُ فِي شَاهِدِهِ غَرِيبٌ، وَمَوْجُودَهُ لَا يَحْمِلُهُ عِلْمٌ أَوْ يُظْهِرُهُ وَجْدٌ، أَوْ يَقُومُ بِهِ رَسْمٌ، أَوْ تُطِيقُهُ إِشَارَةٌ، أَوْ يَشْمَلُهُ اسْمُ غَرِيبٍ، فَغُرْبَةُ الْعَارِفِ غُرْبَةُ الْغُرْبَةِ؛ لِأَنَّهُ غَرِيبُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

stranger-ness of the *'ârif*,[654] because he or she is peculiar with regard to his/her witnesses[655] and his/her companions.[656] His or her finds are not delivered by knowledge,[657] revealed by *wajd*,[658] established by forms,[659] expressed by signals,[660] or outlined by definitions.[661] The stranger-ness of the *'ârif* is the epitome of all stranger-ness, because he/she is a stranger in this life and the hereafter.[662]

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[654] *'Ârif'* (lit., 'knower') is one endowed with beneficial knowledge of the heart, not merely technical knowledge of the intellect.

[655] The outer and inner indicants that testify to him or her concerning the uprightness of his or her state.

[656] The knowledge, conduct, and state that accompany him or her in this world are unlike those of others.

[657] Although they are not counter to what knowledge dictates, knowledge alone cannot procure them.

[658] *'Wajd'* is a verbal noun from *'wajada'* (lit., found or experienced). It is usually translated as 'ecstasy.' See Station 66.

[659] They are beyond what the material forms (of the body) can handle.

[660] They cannot be explained, even through symbolism.

[661] No statement can fully describe them.

[662] For the seekers of this *dunyâ* do not recognize them or have affinity towards them because of their differences; even most of the seekers of the hereafter cannot relate to their state.

Station 78: Submersion
al-Gharaq (الغَرَق)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ}

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead...}[663] *[aṣ-Ṣâffât 37: 103]*

هَذَا اسْمٌ يُشَارُ بِهِ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ إِلَى مَنْ تَوَسَّطَ الْمَقَامَ، وَجَاوَزَ حَدَّ التَّفَرُّقِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

This is a word that refers, in this chapter, to one who has reached the middle of the station and has crossed the boundary of *tafarruq* (dispersion).[664] It is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: اسْتِغْرَاقُ الْعِلْمِ فِي عَيْنِ الْحَالِ، وَهَذَا رَجُلٌ:

The first level is the submergence of knowledge into the inward state, and this is in regard to a person who has:

1. قَدْ ظَفِرَ بِالِاسْتِقَامَةِ
2. وَتَحَقَّقَ فِي الْإِشَارَةِ

1. accomplished rectitude (uprightness)

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663 The station of *al-gharaq* (drowning/submersion) was started by this verse because both Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel must have been so completely absorbed into their commitment to God and devotion to Him that they lost sensation of their egos during that moment of ultimate submission and sacrifice.

664 *Tafarruq* (تَفَرُّق) (meaning diversion, dispersion, and distractibility) is when the soul is scattered and pulled in many directions. It is the opposite of *jam'* (جَمْع): union, unity, wholeness, togetherness with Allah.

2. ascertained the signals/indicants[665]

3. فَاسْتَحَقَّ صِحَّةَ النِّسْبَةِ

3. and thereby deserves the provenance[666]

The second level is the submergence of the signals into disclosure,[667] and this is a person who:

الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: اسْتِغْرَاقُ الْإِشَارَةِ فِي الْكَشْفِ، وَهَذَا رَجُلٌ:

1. speaks of their own finds[668]
2. walks along with their visions[669]
3. does not feel their crude form[670]

1. يَنْطِقُ عَنْ مَوْجُودِهِ
2. وَيَسِيرُ مَعَ مَشْهُودِهِ
3. وَلَا يُحِسُّ بِرُعُونَةِ رَسْمِهِ

The third level is the submergence of the manifestations into the union,[671] and this is a person who:

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: اسْتِغْرَاقُ الشَّوَاهِدِ فِي الْجَمْعِ، وَهَذَا رَجُلٌ:

1. was cloaked by the lights of

1. شَمَلَتْهُ أَنْوَارُ الْأَوَّلِيَّةِ

---

[665] His/her signals point with clarity to true *aḥwâl* (inner states), and they are consistent.

[666] Being attributed to the Most High as His servant, the highest honor one may aspire to.

[667] Disclosure of the many manifestations of the Divine attributes.

[668] When he/she describes the states and stations, he/she does that based on experience, not only knowledge.

[669] His/her beholding of the ultimate objective accompanies him/her on the path.

[670] Because of their focus on their goal, they do not even feel the rudimentary form of their self.

[671] Absorption into the *dhât* (ipseity) of the Divine. The perfect *shuhood* is witnessing the multiplicity of His attributes in the Oneness of His essence/ipseity.

(Divine) antecedence,

2. so he or she gazed with open eyes into pre-eternity,[672]

3. and thus got rid of the lower aspirations[673]

2. فَفَتَحَ عَيْنَهُ فِي مُطَالَعَةِ الْأَزَلِيَّةِ

3. فَتَخَلَّصَ مِنَ الْهِمَمِ الدَّنِيَّةِ

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[672] He/she beholds that moment when Allah was, and everything else of the universe (السِّوَى) was not.

[673] After mentally traveling to pre-eternity, one will only seek the First and Necessary Extant, not the contingent and originated creations.

Station 79: Absence
al-Ghaybah (الْغَيْبَةُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: { وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ}

Allah, the Almighty, said: {And he turned away from them and said: Oh, my sorrow over Yoosuf.}[674] *[Yoosuf 12: 84]*

الْغَيْبَةُ الَّتِي يُشَارُ إِلَيْهَا فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The absence[675] that is referenced in this matter is of three levels:

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى غَيْبَةُ الْمُرِيدِ فِي تَخَلُّصِ الْقَصْدِ عَنْ أَيْدِي الْعَلَائِقِ، وَدَرْكِ الْعَوَائِقِ لِالْتِمَاسِ الْحَقَائِقِ

The first level is the absence of the seeker in rescuing the intent from the grab of attachments and the seizure of hindrances, to pursue the truths.[676]

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ غَيْبَةُ السَّالِكِ عَنْ رُسُومِ الْعِلْمِ

The second level is the absence of the traveler from the technicalities of

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[674] His longing for Yoosuf and grief over his loss made him seem absent from the fresh incident of losing his other son.

[675] This is about being consumed in a pursuit to the point of being absent from all others. If a mother is sitting in the middle of a gathering while concerned about the safety of her faraway child, she will be present in form, but absent in spirit.

[676] When the seeker embarks on the path of seeking the truths, they will be trying to purify their intentions, free themselves from any attachment to anything that will slow them down on their journey, and move as fast as possible to not be caught and seized by the hindrances. This will make the seeker absent from all other concerns and pursuits.

knowledge,[677] the defects of service,[678] and the concessions of lethargy.[679]

وَعِلَلِ السَّعْيِ وَرُخَصِ الْفُتُورِ

The third level is the absence of the knower from the beholding of the states, manifestations, and levels [finding shelter] in the fortress of union.[680]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ غَيْبَةُ الْعَارِفِ عَنْ عُيُونِ الْأَحْوَالِ وَالشَّوَاهِدِ وَالدَّرَجَاتِ فِي حِصْنِ الْجَمْعِ

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[677] The knowledge that is not accompanied by *ḥâl* is not beneficial. The outer knowledge of the tongue will come to be refined by the inner knowledge of the heart. When others care about the intricacies and minutiae of knowledge, he or she cares about its fruits.

[678] The worst of which is seeing one's service as one's own achievement, not as Allah's gift.

[679] The one who is carried by their *ḥâl* will not seek those concessions, because they do not experience lassitude.

[680] His or her togetherness with the One obliterates from his/her vision and concern all states, forms, and indicants: both internal and external.

Station 80: Establishment
at-Tamakkun (التَّمَكُّنِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...And let them not disquiet[681] you who are not certain [in faith].} *[ar-Room 30: 60]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ}

Establishment is above *ṭuma'neenah* (serenity), and it refers to the pinnacle of stability. It is of three levels:

التَّمَكُّنُ فَوْقَ الطَّمَأْنِينَةِ، وَهُوَ الْإِشَارَةُ إِلَى غَايَةِ الِاسْتِقْرَارِ. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

The first level is the establishment of the seeker, and it is to combine:

1. correct *qaṣd* (intent) to move them
2. the glimmer of *shuhood* (witnessing) to carry them
3. the breadth of the path to give them respite[682]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى تَمَكُّنُ الْمُرِيدِ؛ وَهُوَ أَنْ يَجْتَمِعَ لَهُ:

1. صِحَّةُ قَصْدٍ تُسَيِّرُهُ
2. وَلَمْعُ شُهُودٍ يَحْمِلُهُ
3. وَسِعَةُ طَرِيقٍ تُرَوِّحُهُ

The second level is the

والدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ تَمَكُّنُ

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[681] The actual word in Arabic literally means 'cause you to be light,' which is also translated as 'induce you to levity.' It may also be translated as 'cause you to be unstable/flighty/volatile/unsteady/unestablished.'

[682] The path is straight but also wide, giving the traveler flexibility, room for rejuvenation, and variety of secondary volitions to engage, leading to his or her one goal.

establishment of the traveler, and it is to combine:

1. genuine detachment[683]
2. the lightning of disclosure
3. purity of *hâl*

السَّالِكِ، وَهُوَ أَنْ يَجْتَمِعَ لَهُ:

1. صِحَّةُ انْقِطَاعٍ
2. وَبَرْقُ كَشْفٍ
3. وَ صَفَاءُ حَالٍ

The third level is the establishment of the *'ârif*, and this is:

1. to reach the presence *(al-ḥaḍrah)*[684]
2. above the veils of pursual[685]
3. wearing the light of procurement[686]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ تَمَكُّنُ الْعَارِفِ، وَهُوَ أَنْ:

1. يَحْصُلَ فِي الْحَضْرَةِ
2. فَوْقَ حَجْبِ الطَّلَبِ
3. لَابِسًا نُورَ الْوُجُودِ

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683 Detachment from *as-siwâ* (all else [other than Allah]).

684 This is the Divine presence.

685 Having transcended the defects that accompany the worship before the complete refinement of the self (or, to the sheikh [may Allah have mercy on him], complete dissolution of the self, as he seems, in this book, to consider *fanâ'* the highest end). As mentioned before, the self needs to be purified to subsist by Allah, for Allah, with Allah. The sheikh may mean here that one's very consciousness of their worship may be a veil between them and God until they stop perceiving the self and ascribing anything to it.

686 *Wujood* or finding their pursued goal: the Divine.

SECTION IX: THE REALITIES

AL-ḤAQÂ'IQ (الحَقَائِق)

The section on the realities[687] is composed of ten stations:	وأما قِسْمُ الحَقَائِقِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. disclosure	1. المُكَاشَفَة
2. witnessing	2. والمُشَاهَدَة
3. beholding	3. والمُعَايَنَة
4. life	4. والحَيَاة
5. contraction	5. والقَبْض

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[687] Do matter and phenomena around us provide a sufficient account of the reality of this existence? Between the idealists (who went so far as deny their real existence) and the materialists (who found them sufficient for our understanding of this existence), Islam affirms the reality of the material existence but condemns those who do not see beyond it. Allah said:

"يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ"

{They know what is apparent of the worldly life, but they, of the hereafter, are unaware.} *(ar-Room 30:7)*

Allah praises those who believe in that which is beyond their empirical experience: the unseen, about which clear proofs have been established to uphold their reality and which human conscience (and our inner sense) cannot deny. Allah said:

"هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ*الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ"

{... a guidance for those conscious of Allah * Who believe in the unseen...} *(al-Baqarah 2:3-5)*

In this section, Imam al-Harawi addresses the higher realities of this existence and the achievement of a greater awareness of them.

6. expansion	6. والبَسْط
7. intoxication	7. والسُّكْر
8. sobriety	8. والصَّحْو
9. connection	9. والاتِّصال
10. separation	10.والانْفِصال

Station 81: Disclosure
al-Mukâshafah (الْمُكَاشَفَةُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And He revealed to His servant what He revealed.}[688] *[an-Najm 53:10]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى"

Disclosure is the exchange of secrets between two intimate interiors.[689] In this respect, it refers to transcending the veils in actuality.[690] It is of three levels:

الْمُكَاشَفَةُ مُهَادَاةُ السِّرِّ بَيْنَ مُتَبَاطِنَيْنِ، وَهِيَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ بُلُوغُ مَا وَرَاءَ الْحِجَابِ وُجُودًا، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ:

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[688] The obvious relevance between the verse and the topic is that revelation is the highest form of disclosure of the realities that descend only onto the hearts of the chosen prophets and messengers. It must be said, though, that the other types of disclosure can never be compared to this highest form in their reality, certainty, scope, or significance.

[689] This is about subtle secrets being exchanged between two intimate companions. The exchange here is from interior to interior, thus the use of *mutabâṭinayn*, which means two companions with their *bâṭins* (interiors) connected.

[690] The veils of our egos and the busy phenomena around us that keep us from beholding the reality of our existence and the omnipotence, primacy, and antecedence of God, His creation of us from nothingness, our immense need for Him, and our final return to Him.

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى مُكَاشَفَةٌ تَدُلُّ عَلَى التَّحْقِيقِ الصَّحِيحِ، وَهِيَ لَا تَكُونُ مُسْتَدَامَةً، فَإِذَا كَانَتْ حِينًا دُونَ حِينٍ، وَلَمْ يُعَارِضْهَا تَفَرُّقٌ، غَيْرَ أَنَّ الْغَيْنَ رُبَّمَا شَابَ مَقَامَهُ، عَلَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَغَ مَبْلَغًا لَا يَلْفِتُهُ قَاطِعٌ، وَلَا يَلْوِيهِ سَبَبٌ، وَلَا يَقْتَطِعُهُ حَظٌّ وَهِيَ دَرَجَةُ الْقَاصِدِ.

The first level is a disclosure that leads to the correct realization.[691] It is not constant (at this level). When it is occasional but unterminated by *tafarruq* (dispersion), even if their station is transiently smudged by haze, [the seeker] has reached a level at which no interrupter will divert them,[692] no cause will swerve them, and no self-interest will impede them.[693] This is the level of *al-qâṣid* (the pursuer).

فَإِذَا اسْتَدَامَتْ فَهِيَ الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ.

If this becomes constant, then it is the second level.

وَأَمَّا الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ

As for the third level, it is the

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691 This is the realization of the truth as it is out there, correcting our beliefs and the realization of the prescriptive will of God, motivating us on to the right path and refining our practice. The greatest disclosure is to show the servant the details of the path, including the distinction between truth and falsehood and the realization of the shortest way to God and the flaws of the *nafs* that may cause his/her detriment or delay. This disclosure is better than disclosing some of the relatively unseen (such as what is in a closed box or behind a closed door) to some people. Such disclosure may happen to the *awliyâ'* of *ar-Raḥmân* and those of Satan, though the source, significance, and purpose of it are not the same.

692 The highway bandits will not cause them to change their path.

693 His/her aspiration, determination, and collectedness will not be diminished by any of the lower self-interests.

disclosure of the very reality, not the knowledge of it. It is a disclosure that leaves no mark[694] indicating enjoyment, forcing a pause, or settling for images.[695] The end of this disclosure is the witnessing.[696]

فَمُكَاشَفَةُ عَيْنٍ، لَا مُكَاشَفَةُ عِلْمٍ، وَهِيَ مُكَاشَفَةٌ لَا تَذَرُ سِمَةً تُشِيرُ إِلَى الْتِذَاذٍ، أَوْ تُلْجِئُ إِلَى تَوَقُّفٍ، أَوْ تَنْزِلُ على تَرَسُّمٍ، وَغَايَةُ هَذِهِ الْمُكَاشَفَةِ الْمُشَاهَدَةُ.

694 There is nothing left to be qualified by marks and descriptions at this level that the sheikh dedicates to *fanâ'*.

695 The images refer to the exterior realities of matter and temporal phenomena, including the remnants of the self.

696 See the next chapter for the station of witnessing.

Station 82: Witnessing
al-Mushâhadah (الْمُشَاهَدَةُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ"

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Surely in that there is indeed a reminding to him who has a heart, or is eager on hearing, and is a constantly present witness (to the truth).} *[Qâf 50:37]*[697]

الْمُشَاهَدَةُ سُقُوطُ الْحِجَابِ بَتًّا وَهِيَ فَوْقَ الْمُكَاشَفَةِ لِأَنَّ الْمُكَاشَفَةَ وِلَايَةُ النَّعْتِ، وَفِيهِ شَيْءٌ مِنْ بَقَايَا الرَّسْمِ، وَالْمُشَاهَدَةَ وِلَايَةُ الْعَيْنِ وَالذَّاتِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

Witnessing is the complete dropping of the veil. It is above *al-mukâshafah* (disclosure) because *al-mukâshafah* attends to the attributes, so it has some remains of the images,[698] while *al-mushâhadah* attends to the (Divine) ipseity (*dhât*).[699] It is of three levels:

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[697] Translation by Dr. Muhammad Maḥmūd Ghâli.

[698] Since the names and attributes manifest in temporal existences and phenomena, which are the images that veil the reality.

[699] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim points out in *Madârij* that observing the *dhât* which is described by all attributes of perfection and majesty is the way of the prophets and messengers who did not attempt to strip the *dhât* from the attributes or behold the attributes in isolation from the *dhât*, which is ontologically impossible. However, observing some of the attributes and not all is inferior to observing the *dhât* in which subsist all the attributes. Finally, observing the variant manifestations of the attributes, like the manifestations of

The first level is the witnessing of *ma'rifah* (recognition),[700] which transcends the boundaries of knowledge[701] in the tablets of the light of actualization,[702] making their mount kneel down in the front courtyard of (the citadel of) *jam'* (togetherness).

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى مُشَاهَدَةُ مِعْرِفَةٍ، تَجْرِي فَوْقَ حُدُودِ الْعِلْمِ، فِي لَوَائِحِ نُورِ الْوُجُودِ، مُنِيخَةٌ بِفِنَاءِ الْجَمْعِ.

The second level is the eye witnessing, which cuts off the ropes of signposts,[703] wears the attributes of holiness,[704] and silences the tongues of symbolism.[705]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ مُشَاهَدَةُ مُعَايَنَةٍ، تَقْطَعُ حِبَالَ الشَّوَاهِدِ، وَتَلْبَسُ نُعُوتَ الْقُدْسِ، وَتُخْرِسُ

His power or mercy in the temporal existence, should not distract the seeker from observing Him (exalted is He) and His oneness.

[700] The beneficial knowledge of the heart, not merely technical knowledge of the intellect.

[701] The seeds of knowledge await the water of recognition to yield the fruits of devotion and full actualization. Spiritual experiences complement knowledge rather than substitute for it.

[702] Actualization of realization and devotion.

[703] The indicants to Allah are likened to ropes that pull the servant towards Him; when he or she reaches Him, the ropes are of no use.

[704] The virtuous attributes that Allah will bestow on him or her. While these are not the attributes of the Divine Himself, it is recommended to pursue the human manifestations of His attributes where this is befitting, such as gentleness, mercy, and generosity. His attributes of majesty are His alone. Conversely, there are virtuous attributes for humans that are unbefitting of God, such as humility, brokenness, and poverty.

[705] There is no more pointing after actualization.

أَلْسِنَةَ الْإِشَارَاتِ.

The third level is the witnessing of *jam'*, which pulls towards the locus of *jam'*, possessing certainty of the advent[706] and sailing the ocean of full actualization.[707]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ مُشَاهَدَةُ جَمْعٍ. تَجْذِبُ إِلَى عَيْنِ الْجَمْعِ، مَالِكَةً لِصِحَّةِ الْوُرُودِ، رَاكِبَةً بَحْرَ الْوُجُودِ.

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[706] Having complete confidence in the road and the destination.

[707] Being without the self—all for God, with God, by God—where God becomes one's hearing with which one hears, one's sight with which one sees, one's hand with which one strikes, and one's leg with which one walks.

Station 83: Beholding
al-Mu ʻâyanah (المُعَايَنَةُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
"أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ"

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...Hast thou not turned thy vision to thy Lord? —How He doth prolong the shadow!...}[708] *[al-Furqân 25:45]*

الْمُعَايَنَةُ ثَلَاثٌ:
إِحْدَاهَا: مُعَايَنَةُ الْأَبْصَارِ.

There are three types of beholding:

The first is the beholding of the eyesight.[709]

الثَّانِيَةُ: مُعَايَنَةُ عَيْنِ الْقَلْبِ، وَهِيَ مَعْرِفَةُ عَيْنِ الشَّيْءِ عَلَى نَعْتِهِ، عِلْمًا يَقْطَعُ الرَّيْبَةَ، وَلَا تَشُوبُهُ حَيْرَةٌ، وهذه مُعَايَنَةٌ بِشَوَاهِدِ الْعِلْمِ.

The second is the beholding of the eye of the heart,[710] and this is the realization of the essence of things in accordance with their attributes, a realization that ends doubt and that is unaccompanied by ambivalence. This is

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[708] Yusuf Ali's translation. It is possible that the sheikh alludes to seeing the Lord through the manifestations of His actions and attributes.

[709] This would be the beholding of the external realities of the *shahâdah* with our eyes. This empirical knowledge is at the bottom because unless it leads to the following levels, it will not avail us.

[710] This is the insight of the heart versus the sight of the eye in the previous level. This is more important because it sees the realities behind the forms. Allah said:

" فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَٰكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ"

{...For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.} *(al-Ḥajj 22:46)*

the beholding through the indicants of knowledge.[711]

The third is the beholding of the eye of the spirit, and this is the eye that beholds the reality[712] with complete clarity. In fact, the spirits become pure and honored with subsistence[713] only to behold the light of the [Divine] presence and witness the splendor of the [Divine] might and pull the hearts[714] to the vicinity of the [Divine] presence.[715]

الثَّالِثَةُ: مُعَايَنَةُ عَيْنِ الرُّوحِ، وَهِيَ الَّتِي تُعَايِنُ الْحَقَّ عِيَانًا مَحْضًا، وَالْأَرْوَاحُ إِنَّمَا طَهُرَتْ وَأُكْرِمَتْ بِالْبَقَاءِ لِتُعَايِنَ سَنَاءَ الْحَضْرَةِ، وَتُشَاهِدَ بَهَاءَ الْعِزَّةِ، وَتَجْذِبَ الْقُلُوبَ إِلَى فِنَاءِ الْحَضْرَةِ.

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[711] This is a realization that is based on guided reflection and *al-khabar aṣ-ṣâdiq* (truthful reports). It is the fruit of knowledge of the created signs of Allah (in the universe) and His spoken signs (in the Book).

[712] This is the reality (with a small 'r') in reference to the realities of existence, according to most commentators. If this is in reference to God, then it refers to the purified souls who have such ultimate certainty and strong connection that they behold the Lord with their spiritual eyes in the *dunyâ*.

[713] As Ibn al-Qayyim states in *Madârij*, this subsistence (after thorough purification) is the highest of stations and ontological self-annihilation is neither possible nor required, even though some aspects of self-annihilation (*fanâ'*) may be a required bridge to this sanctified subsistence (*baqâ'*).

[714] *'Nafs'* and 'spirit' have been used interchangeably in the Revelation, but in the terminology of the *sulook* scholars, when they say the *nafs* becomes a heart and the heart becomes a spirit, they mean that when the *nafs* is purified from its flaws, it is referred to as a heart; when that is also purified, it is referred to as a spirit, making the spirit the seat of the highest stations and grants.

[715] The Prophet ﷺ said:

"تَعَلَّمُوا أَنَّهُ لَنْ يَرَى أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ رَبَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ"

"Be well informed that none of you will see their Lord until they die." (Muslim)

All forms of witnessing and beholding refer to the increased certainty and the vividness of the mental, then spiritual, representation of one's object of attention, worship, and adoration.

Station 84: Life
al-Ḥayâh (الْحَيَاة)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And is one who was dead and We gave him life...} *[al-An'âm 6:122]*[716]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"أَوَمَنْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاه"

The word 'life,' in this respect, is used in reference to three things:

اسْمُ الْحَيَاةِ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ يُشَارُ بِهِ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَشْيَاءَ:

The first life is coming to life by knowledge from the death of ignorance. It has three breaths:

الْحَيَاةُ الْأُولَى حَيَاةُ الْعِلْمِ مِنْ مَوْتِ الْجَهْلِ، وَلَهَا ثَلَاثَةُ أَنْفَاسٍ:

1. the breath of fear — 1. نَفْسُ الْخَوْفِ
2. the breath of hope — 2. وَنَفْسُ الرَّجَاءِ
3. the breath of love717 — 3. وَنَفْسُ الْمَحَبَّةِ

The second life is coming to life through *jam'* from the death of

وَالْحَيَاةُ الثَّانِيَةُ حَيَاةُ الْجَمْعِ مِنْ مَوْتِ التَّفْرِقَةِ،

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716 The complete verse says:

"أَوَمَن كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ"

{And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing.} *(al-An'âm 6:122)*

717 The means to this life is the beneficial knowledge that will result in the blessed triad of fear, hope, and love which sustains this life.

dispersion.[718] It has three breaths:

وَلَهَا ثَلَاثَةُ أَنْفَاسٍ:

1. the breath of dependence
2. the breath of need
3. the breath of pride[719]

1. نَفَسُ الِاضْطِرَارِ
2. وَنَفَسُ الِافْتِقَارِ
3. وَنَفَسُ الِافْتِخَارِ

The third life is the life of actualization, and it is a life (subsisting) by the True One. It has three breaths:

وَالْحَيَاةُ الثَّالِثَةُ حَيَاةُ الْوُجُودِ. وَهِيَ حَيَاةٌ بِالْحَقِّ، وَلَهَا ثَلَاثَةُ أَنْفَاسٍ:

1. the breath of awe,[720] which slays all flaws
2. the breath of actualization,[721] which prevents all detachment[722]
3. the breath of singularity, which causes attachment[723]

1. نَفَسُ الْهَيْبَةِ، وَهُوَ يُمِيتُ الِاعْتِلَالَ
2. وَنَفَسُ الْوُجُودِ، وَهُوَ يَمْنَعُ الِانْفِصَالَ
3. وَنَفَسُ الِانْفِرَادِ وَهُوَ يُورِثُ الِاتِّصَالَ

There is nothing beyond this that can

وَلَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مَلْحَظٌ

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[718] So now, one is seeking Allah with their entirety and complete focus. Their will is not fractured. They are not distracted by the variety of phenomena around them.

[719] The pride here is the confidence in Allah and His promise and contentment with His agency over us and rejoicing in being His servant. It is not about self-conceit and arrogance. Without Him, we feel our vulnerability, destituteness, and poverty. With and by Him alone, we feel joyful and confident.

[720] The awe that befalls us when we witness His majesty and glory.

[721] To find Allah, which is when the heart feels complete certainty in and actualization of faith.

[722] There is no moment when the will is not conforming to His and the heart is not focused on Him.

[723] Attachment to the One through the union of wills and vanishment of perception of anything other than Him.

be perceived by the spectators/thinkers or pointed out by allusions.[724]

لِلنَّظَارَةِ، وَلَا طَاقَةٌ لِلْإِشَارَةِ.

[724] What the knowers perceive through experiential faith is beyond the categories of human understanding, so no words or allusions can describe it.

Station 85: Constriction
al-Qabḍ (الْقَبْضّ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Thereafter We grasped it to Us, an easy (or gradual) grasping.} *[al-Furqân 25:46]*[725]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا"

Constriction in this chapter refers to the station of the precious ones[726] whom the Real has spared for Himself.[727] They are of three groups:

الْقَبْضُ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ اسْمٌ يُشَارُ بِهِ إِلَى مَقَامِ الصِّنَّائِنِ الَّذِينَ ادَّخَرَهُمُ الْحَقُّ اصْطِنَاعًا لِنَفْسِهِ. وَهُمْ ثَلَاثُ فِرَقٍ:

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[725] This is Dr. Ghâli's translation. The verses talk about the shadow and how Allah stretches it and then pulls it back. The word *'qabḍ'* for contraction/constriction appears in this context.

[726] The word *ḍanâ'in* in Arabic means 'too precious to be shared.'

[727] Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah bestow mercy on him) points out in *Madârij* that the *qabḍ* in this chapter is not the *qabḍ* of the beginnings, where Allah causes people distress (tightness in the chests) when they sin in order to invite them to repentance, or when they get distracted in order to save them from heedlessness. This *qabḍ* belongs to the section of realities, so it is a much higher station. These are people Allah finds too precious to share with anyone. He constricts their hearts from *as-siwâ* (other than God) so that they become His alone.

فِرْقَةً قَبَضْتَهُمْ إِلَيْهِ؛ قَبْضَ التَّوَقِّي، فَصُنْتَ بِهِمْ عَنْ أَعْيُنِ الْعَالَمِينَ.

A group that He protectively constricted towards Himself, sparing them from the eyes of the people.[728]

وَفِرْقَةً قَبَضْتَهُمْ بِسِتْرِهِمْ فِي لِبَاسِ التَّلْبِيسِ، وَأَسْبَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَكِلَّةَ الرُّسُومِ، فَأَخْفَاهُمْ عَنْ عُيُونِ الْعَالَمِ.

A group that He constricted towards Himself by covering them with the garment of disguise[729] and draping them with forms,[730] so He concealed them from the eyes of the people.[731]

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[728] These are the people who seclude themselves and stay away from people. This would be a favorable station in cases of severe *fitnah*, as at the end of times. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرَ مَالِ الْمُسْلِمِ غَنَمٌ يَتْبَعُ بِهَا شَعَفَ الْجِبَالِ وَمَوَاقِعَ الْقَطْرِ، يَفِرُّ بِدِينِهِ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ"

"A time will soon come when the best property of a Muslim will be sheep which he will take on the top of mountains and the places of rainfall (valleys) in order to flee with his religion from afflictions." (Bukhari)

[729] People see those *awliyâ'* mixing with them like ordinary folks but they are still different, so the people are confounded about them.

[730] The mundane forms and phenomena of life most people share, so they go to work, marry, have children, walk through the markets, dress in regular clothes, and so forth.

[731] By their ordinariness, not by their seclusion or isolation. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"الْمُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَيَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الَّذِي لاَ يُخَالِطُ النَّاسَ وَلاَ يَصْبِرُ عَلَى أَذَاهُمْ"

"The believer who mixes with people and bears their harm with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not put up with their harm." (Related by Ibn Mâjah, Aḥmad, and at-Tirmidhi with a sound chain)

وَفِرْقَةً قَبْضُهُمْ مِنْهُمْ إِلَيْهِ، فَصَافَاهُمْ مُصَافَاةَ سِرٍّ، فَضَنَّ بِهِمْ عَلَيْهِمْ.

A group that He constricted from themselves towards Himself, so He brought them secretly into His intimate company and spared them from their selves.[732]

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[732] These seekers are not not paying attention only to the people, but their awe of the Lord makes them unaware of themselves, so they do not see their actions as theirs and they do not see their agency in any of the good they do; they see only His.

Station 86: Expansion
al-Basṭ (الْبَسْطُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
"يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيهِ"

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...He multiplies you thereby...}[733]
[ash-Shoorâ 42:11]

الْبَسْطُ: أَنْ يُرْسِلَ شَوَاهِدَ الْعَبْدِ فِي مَدَارِجِ الْعِلْمِ، وَيُسْبِلَ عَلَى بَاطِنِهِ رِدَاءَ الِاخْتِصَاصِ، وَهُمْ أَهْلُ التَّلْبِيسِ، وَإِنَّما بُسِطُوا فِي مَيْدَانِ الْبَسْطِ، لِأَحَدِ ثَلَاثِ مَعَانٍ، لِكُلِّ مَعْنًى طَائِفَةٌ.

Expansion is when [Allah] accords the exterior of the servant with the indications of knowledge and dresses their interior with the garment of devotion. These are the people of disguise.[734] They have been expanded in the realm of expansion for one of three purposes; for each purpose a group is dedicated:

فَطَائِفَةٌ بُسِطَتْ رَحْمَةً لِلْخَلْقِ، يُبَاسِطُونَهُمْ وَيُلَابِسُونَهُمْ، فَيَسْتَضِيئُونَ

One group has been expanded as a mercy for the creation. They are pleasant towards them[735] and mix with them so

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[733] The verse is about the expansion of provisions and offspring.

[734] They act like ordinary people in their customs and habits, but they are completely unlike them in their inner state, manners, and etiquettes.

[735] The Prophet ﷺ said:
"إنَّ أحبَّكم إليَّ أحسانُكم أخلاقًا المُوطَّؤون أكنافًا الَّذين يألَفون ويُؤلفون وإنَّ أبغضَكم إليَّ المَشَّاؤون بالنَّميمةِ المُفرِّقون بين الأحبَّةِ الملتمِسون للبُرآءِ العنت."
"The most beloved to me of you are the those best in manners, those who are humble and easygoing, those who befriend and are

بِنُورِهِمْ، وَالْحَقَائِقُ مَجْمُوعَةٌ، وَالسَّرَائِرُ مَصُونَةٌ.

that they may find illumination in their light, while the realities are collected[736] and the inner secrets are protected.[737]

وَطَائِفَةٌ بُسِطَتْ لِقُوَّةِ مُعَايَنَتِهِمْ، وَتَصْمِيمِ مَنَاظِرِهِمْ؛ لِأَنَّهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لَا تُخَالِجُ الشَّوَاهِدُ مَشْهُودَهُمْ، وَلَا تَضْرِبُ رِيَاحُ الرُّسُومِ مَوْجُودَهُمْ، فَهُمْ مَبْسُوطُونَ فِي قَبْضَةِ الْقَبْضِ.

Another group has been expanded for the strength of their beholding[738] and the steadiness of their visions,[739] for their insights are not scrambled by indicators[740] and the winds of the forms do not attack their procurements,[741] so they are expanded in the grip of *qabḍ* (constriction).[742]

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befriended. The most hated to me of you are those who spread tales among people, separate between those who love each other, and seek to cause harm to the innocent." (aṭ-Ṭabarâni; and it is corroborated by many other similar reports)

[736] They are not distracted by mixing with them.

[737] They do not uncover their special relationship with Allah, seeking to safeguard it.

[738] Their beholding of the realities beyond the images and ultimately their beholding of the Real with the eyes of their hearts.

[739] Their visions penetrated all the variables, so they became immune to change.

[740] The indicators (signs) have taken them to His door. After they arrive, they do not depend on them anymore. They leave them in the front yard.

[741] The exterior forms and transient phenomena do not ruin the purity of their spiritual procurements.

[742] None of the virtues of the last station of *qabḍ* (constriction) is lost by them. They straddle the stations with ease. Allah moves them between them to ensure their ultimate devotion in all conditions. Imam Ibn 'Aṭâ' (may Allah bestow mercy on him) says:

Another group was expanded as flags on the path, imams of guidance, and beacons for the travelers.

وَطَائِفَةٌ بُسِطَتْ أَعْلَامًا عَلَى الطَّرِيقِ، وَأَئِمَّةً لِلْهُدَى، وَمَصَابِيحَ لِلسَّالِكِينَ.

بَسَطَكَ كي لا يبقيك مع القبض، وقَبَضَكَ كي لا يتركك مع البسط، وأخرجك عنهما كي لا تكون لشيء دونه.

"He expanded you so as to not keep you in contraction; He contracted you so as to not keep you in expansion; and He took you out of both so that you do not belong to anything apart from Him."

Station 87: Intoxication
as-Sukr (السُّكْرُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...he said: My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You...}[743] *[al-A'raf 7:143]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ"

Intoxication[744] in this matter is a name that is used in reference to the loss of control during the [state of] excitement.[745] It is of the stations of the lovers in particular, because the certainties of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation) do not accept it[746] and the stations of

السُّكْرُ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ اسْمٌ يُشَارُ بِهِ إِلَى سُقُوطِ التَّمَالُكِ فِي الطَّرَبِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ مَقَامَاتِ الْمُحِبِّينَ خَاصَّةً، فَإِنَّ عُيُونَ الْفَنَاءِ لَا تَقْبَلُهُ، وَمَنَازِلَ الْعِلْمِ لَا تَبْلُغُهُ. وَلِلسُّكْرِ ثَلَاثُ

[743] The imam means to say that Moosâ's hearing of his Lord put him into such a state of 'intoxication' that he asked Him to reveal Himself to him.

[744] Imam Ibn al-Qayyim notes in *Madârij* that such a term is suboptimal. Whenever it was used in the Revelation or by the first community, it carried only negative connotations. Despite that, the meaning Imam al-Harawi speaks of is a noble meaning and the state is a true state, although inferior to the next state of *ṣaḥw* (sobriety).

[745] The excitement that may result from intense spiritual encounters and focus on the Divine to the point of self-dissolution may impair the person's control, resulting, for instance, in esoteric utterances during such trances. See the discussion on *shaṭaḥât* in the introduction.

[746] Since in the state of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation), there is no self-perception to have excitement.

knowledge do not reach it.[747] There are three signs of intoxication:

عَلَامَاتُ:

1. aversion to occupation with reports, with perfect veneration[748]

1. الضِّيقُ عَنْ الِاشْتِغَالِ بِالْخَبَرِ، وَالتَّعْظِيمُ قَائِمٌ

2. sailing through the middle of the ocean of yearning, with perpetual establishment[749]

2. وَاقْتِحَامُ لُجَّةِ الشَّوْقِ، وَالتَّمَكُّنُ دَائِمٌ

3. drowning in the sea of bliss, with distraught patience[750]

3. وَالْغَرَقُ فِي بَحْرِ السُّرُورِ، وَالصَّبْرُ هَائِمٌ

Anything aside from this is mere confusion[751] that is ignorantly referred to as intoxication or mystification that is unjustifiably given its name.[752]

وَمَا سِوَى هَذَا فَحَيْرَةٌ تُنْحَلُ اسْمَ السُّكْرِ جَهْلًا، أَوْ هَيَمَانًا يُسَمَّى بِاسْمِهِ جَورًا.

Anything aside from this is inconsistent with true insight, such as the

وَمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَكُلُّهُ يُنَاقِضُ الْبَصَائِرَ، كَسُكْرِ

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747 Because the knowledge of love is not the same as the state of love. Those who possess the knowledge and are deprived of the state will not experience such lofty stations.

748 Imam Ibn al-Qayyim notes in *Madârij* that listening to reports from and about one's Beloved is the joy of the believers, but they may have this aversion if it keeps them from a more noble service to Him or if it comes from pretentious conduits.

749 While they sail through the waves of yearning, they do not forget the requirements of servitude and they adhere to the indications of knowledge, in which they continue to be established.

750 Their yearning depletes their patience and emaciates it.

751 Confusion and incoherence are different from spiritual intoxication.

752 Mystification is a lower station. To the sheikh, intoxication belongs to the higher section of realities.

intoxication of greed,[753] the intoxication of ignorance, and the intoxication of lust.

الْحِرْصِ، وَسُكْرِ الْجَهْلِ، وَسُكْرِ الشَّهْوَةِ

[753] Greed for the pleasures of the *dunyâ*, including egotistic greed for spiritual fulfillment (or supremacy) without taking proper means to earning God's pleasure.

Station 88: Sobriety
aṣ-Ṣaḥw (الصَّحْوُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...until, when terror is removed from their hearts, they will say [to one another]: What has your Lord said? They will say: The truth...}[754] *[Sabâ' 34:23]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"حَتَّى إِذَا فُزِّعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقَّ"

Ṣaḥw is above *sukr* (intoxication) and it suits the station of *basṭ* (expansion). *Ṣaḥw* is a station that is clear of delay,[755] suffices from any pursuit,[756] and is purified from any culpability,[757] for *sukr* is (being intoxicated) with the Real[758] and *ṣaḥw*

الصَّحْوُ فَوْقَ السُّكْرِ، وَهُوَ يُنَاسِبُ مَقَامَ الْبَسْطِ. وَالصَّحْوُ مَقَامٌ صَاحٍ عَنِ الِانْتِظَارِ، مُبَرَّأٌ عَنِ الطَّلَبِ، طَاهِرٌ مِنَ الْحَرَجِ، فَإِنَّ السُّكْرَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَالصَّحْوَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ بِالْحَقِّ، وَكُلُّ مَا كَانَ فِي عَيْنِ

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754 They became sober after they were shocked by the intensity of hearing God's speech.

755 They arrived at their destination, so there is no more waiting.

756 It is a station of attachment to Allah and subsistence by Allah, so one who has already arrived need not find his or her destination. This never means that one should quit seeking more proximity to their Lord by seeking His pleasures, but it means that their pursuits become effortless.

757 Because one is in complete observance of the demands of *Shari'ah*.

758 You become intoxicated from beholding the Lord with the eyes of your heart.

الْحَقِّ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ حَيْرَةٍ، لَا حَيْرَةَ الشُّبْهَةِ، بَلْ حَيْرَةَ مُشَاهَدَةِ نُورِ الْعِزَّةِ، وَمَا كَانَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمْ يَخْلُ مِنْ صِحَّةٍ، وَلَمْ يُخَفْ عَلَيْهِ مِن نَقِيصَةٍ، وَلَمْ تَتَعَاوَرْهُ عِلَّةٌ.

is (being sober) by the Real, and that which is exposed to the (vision of the) Real is not free of bewilderment:[759] not the bewilderment of misgivings, however, but that of beholding the light of the might. As for that which is by the Real, it is rectified, free of deficiency, and is not subject to any flaws.[760]

وَالصَّحْوُ: مِنْ مَنَازِلِ الْحَيَاةِ، وَأَوْدِيَةِ الْجَمْعِ، وَلَوَائِحِ الْوُجُودِ.

Ṣaḥw is of the stations of life,[761] the valleys of union,[762] and the displays of actuality.[763]

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[759] Beholding Him with the eyes of your heart through absorption into His attributes of majesty and beauty causes bewilderment.

[760] Now they are watching Him *by* Him, so they are not overwhelmed.

[761] See Station 84: Life.

[762] The Sunni union is when one's will is in complete unison with God's will.

[763] See Station 96: Actuality.

Station 89: Connection
al-Ittiṣâl (الاتصال)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Then he approached and descended * And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer.}[764] *[an-Najm 53:8-9]*

He caused the intellects to lose hope by saying, "or closer."[765]

Connection is of three levels:

1. the first is the connection of *i'tiṣâm* (seeking refuge)
2. then the connection of *shuhood* (witnessing)
3. then the connection of *wujood* (actuality)

The connection of *i'tiṣâm* (seeking refuge) is about:

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[764] The sheikh understood this verse to be speaking about God, as understood by some exegetes, but the stronger position of the majority is that it is about Jibreel. The point is clear, though. When you draw closer to the Lord, He draws closer to you, as established in the Sunnah.

[765] Based on the sheikh's interpretation, he means to say here that His mention of "or closer" is to cause the intellects to despair of knowing the reality of that encounter.

1. rectification of one's intent
2. purification of one's will
3. realization of one's *ḥâl* (inner state)[766]

2. ثُمَّ تَصْفِيَةُ الْإِرَادَةِ
3. ثُمَّ تَحْقِيقُ الْحَالِ

The second level is the connection of *shuhood* (witnessing), which is about:

1. riddance from the flaws[767]
2. needing no proofs[768]
3. termination of the diaspora of inner thoughts[769]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: اتِّصَالُ الشُّهُودِ، وَهُوَ:
1. الْخَلَاصُ مِنَ الِاعْتِلَالِ
2. وَالْغِنَى عَنْ الِاسْتِدْلَالِ
3. وَسُقُوطُ شَتَاتِ الْأَسْرَارِ

The third level is the connection of *wujood* (actuality),[770] and this

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: اتِّصَالُ الْوُجُودِ، وَهَذَا الِاتِّصَالُ لَا

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[766] When knowledge leads to devoted action, and that leads to an elevated inner state of alertness, care, concern, trust, and love.

[767] The flaws of *a'mâl* and *aḥwâl* are many, but the most important of them is the feeling of entitlement.

[768] The signposts are not needed after one reaches their destination. The knowledge of God is irresistible (*ḍaroori*), but it is only the fog of sin, bias, blind following, and ulterior motives that bar some from seeing the Truth.

[769] The togetherness is now external and internal; even one's inner thoughts will be collected and unified.

[770] *Wujood* could be a noun, meaning 'existence,' or a verbal noun, meaning 'finding.' It is used to mean the second with a hint from the first. It means finding God, Who is the Real, the Necessarily Existent, and the Maker and Sustainer of all existences. This is the level the sheikh dedicates to *fanâ'* (self-annihilation), or losing

connection cannot be realized by descriptions or qualifications, but can be pointed to only by borrowed names[771] and gestures.

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yourself to find it: losing your *nafs* to find your *rooḥ*, to subsist only with Him, for Him, by Him. See Station 96: Actuality.

[771] These names that are borrowed from our human language, which is limited by our human experiences, simply point us towards concepts whose ontological reality is completely beyond our apprehension.

Station 90: Detachment
al-Infiṣâl (الإنْفِصَال)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...And Allah warns you of Himself...}
[Âl 'Imrân 3:30][772]

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
"وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ"

There is nothing in the stations that has more expanse than detachment.[773] It has three aspects:

لَيْسَ فِي الْمَقَامَاتِ شَيْءٌ فِيهِ مِنَ التَّفَاوُتِ مَا فِي الإِنْفِصَالِ، وَوُجُوهُهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ.

The first is a detachment that is a condition of the connection,[774] which is the detachment from the two worlds[775] by ceasing to behold them, to consider

أَحَدُهَا: انْفِصَالٌ هُوَ شَرْطُ الإِتِّصَالِ، وَهُوَ الإِنْفِصَالُ عَنِ الْكَوْنَيْنِ بِانْفِصَالِ نَظَرِكَ إِلَيْهِمَا، وَانْفِصَالِ تَوَقُّفِكَ

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[772] The point in starting with this verse is to warn the seekers of a type of detachment that would spell ultimate damnation, which is when Allah cuts His slave off because of their heedlessness, transgression, or favoring others over Him, even after they have reached one of the highest rankings.

[773] Detachment is the pursuit of connection to God and subsistence with Him, for Him, and by Him by separating from anything other than Him. It even includes detachment from all previous stations to move to a different level, where you journey to Him only by Him, and this is why the sheikh places this station higher than the station of connection.

[774] See the previous station, Connection (*al-Ittiṣâl*).

[775] In reference to the world of *shahâdah* (seen) and *ghayb* (unseen) or the *dunyâ* (life of this world) and the *âkhirah* (hereafter).

them, or to care about them.[776]

عَلَيْهِمَا، وَانْفِصَالِ مُبَالَاتِكَ بِهِمَا.

The second is a detachment from seeing the detachment that we mentioned, and this is to not see in your ascertaining *shuhood* (witnessing) anything that connects your detachment to anything.[777]

وَالثَّانِي انْفِصَالٌ عَنْ رُؤْيَةِ الِانْفِصَالِ الَّذِي ذَكَرْنَاهُ، وَهُوَ أَنْ لَا يَتَرَاءَى عِنْدَكَ فِي شُهُودِ التَّحْقِيقِ شَيْءٌ يُوصِلُ بِالِانْفِصَالِ مِنْهُمَا إِلَى شَيْءٍ.

The third is the detachment from the connection, and this is a detachment from witnessing the attachment which competes with the truth of antecedence.[778] This is because both

وَالثَّالِثُ انْفِصَالٌ عَنْ الِاتِّصَالِ، وَهُوَ انْفِصَالٌ عَنْ شُهُودِ مُزَاحَمَةِ الِاتِّصَالِ عَيْنَ السَّبْقِ، فَإِنَّ الِانْفِصَالَ وَالِاتِّصَالَ - عَلَى عِظَمِ

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[776] Because one should be seeking Allah alone. Of course, this does not mean that we do not care about His reward or that we do not care about His Messenger (ﷺ), for instance, but it means that we do not care about anything other than Him: through Him and for Him.

[777] He said before that this detachment leads to connection with Allah. What he means by not seeing is that it leads to anything that you do not see as your own action (separation) but see as your detachment from the world as a gift from Him and your subsequent connection with Him as another gift from Him.

[778] This shows that the annihilation the sheikh intends is perceptual, not ontological. He wants you to go back in time before this existence and witness Allah without anything of this existence. Your witnessing of this antecedence will put everything in its place and you will see how transient, contingent, and disposable everything else is. Knowing the sheikh, we ought to think that he must not have intended by this what some may understand to mean

detachment and connection—despite their great variance in name and form—equally share the same flawed cause.[779]

تَفَاوُتِهِمَا فِي الِاسْمِ وَالرَّسْمِ - فِي الْعِلَّةِ سِيَّانِ.

a condemnation of believing in the real ontological existence of the creations. They claim that he meant that there is no existence other than the Divine existence, which is the belief of ontological monism (*waḥdah*), which is considered heretical by *Ahl al-Sunnah*.

[779] Because they all result from seeing yourself. In this phase, which the sheikh dedicates to *fanâ'* (self-annihilation), he finds any sense of the self to be flawed.

SECTION X: THE ENDINGS

AN-NIHÂYÂT (النِّهَايَات)

As for the section on the endings, it is composed of ten stations:	وأما قِسْمُ النِّهَايَاتِ فَهُوَ عَشَرَةُ أبْوابٍ وَهِيَ:
1. recognition	1. المَعْرِفَة
2. annihilation	2. والفَنَاء
3. subsistence	3. والبَقَاء
4. ascertainment	4. والتَّحْقِيق
5. confusion	5. والتَّلْبِيس
6. actuality	6. والوُجُود
7. stripping	7. والتَّجْرِيد
8. singling	8. والتَّفْرِيد
9. union	9. والجَمْع
10. oneness	10. والتَّوْحِيد

Station 91: Recognition
al-Ma'rifah (الْمَعْرِفَةِ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth...}[780] *[al-Mâ'idah 5:83]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ"

Recognition is the encompassing of a thing's ipseity.[781] It is of three levels, and people concerning it are of three groups:

الْمَعْرِفَةُ إِحَاطَةٌ بِعَيْنِ الشَّيْءِ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ، وَالْخَلْقُ فِيهَا ثَلَاثُ فِرَقٍ.

The first level is the recognition of

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: مَعْرِفَةُ

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[780] *Al-ma'rifah* could be translated as 'gnosis,' but due to negative and irrelevant connotations, I prefer to use the original Arabic, which means 'recognition.' In the terminology of the masters of the path, it means the knowledge of the heart that is pure, beneficial, and reformative. The verse was chosen by the sheikh because their *ma'rifah* brought tears to their eyes so it was truly recognition, not merely knowledge. The Qur'anic usage of *ma'rifah* and *'ilm* is usually in positive terms, but both have been used to denote knowledge that did not come to fruition.

[781] This definition makes the recognition of God impossible because no one can encompass His ipseity with their knowledge or any form of realization. However, the intent of the sheikh is to stress the completeness and perfection of this knowledge and its consistency with the extra-mental reality.

الصِّفَاتِ وَالنُّعُوتِ، وَقَدْ وَرَدَتْ أَسَامِيهَا بِالرِّسَالَةِ، وَظَهَرَتْ شَوَاهِدُهَا فِي الصَّنْعَةِ: بِتَبَصُّرِ النُّورِ الْقَائِمِ فِي السِّرِّ، وَطِيبِ حَيَاةِ الْعَقْلِ لِزَرْعِ الْفِكْرِ، وَحَيَاةِ الْقَلْبِ بِحُسْنِ النَّظَرِ بَيْنَ التَّعْظِيمِ وَحُسْنِ الِاعْتِبَارِ. وَهِيَ مَعْرِفَةُ الْعَامَّةِ الَّتِي لَا تَنْعَقِدُ شَرَائِطُ الْيَقِينِ إِلَّا بِهَا، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَرْكَانٍ:

1. إِثْبَاتُ الصِّفَاتِ بِاسْمِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ تَشْبِيهٍ
2. وَنَفْيُ التَّشْبِيهِ عَنْهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ تَعْطِيلٍ
3. وَالْإِيَاسُ مِنْ إِدْرَاكِ كُنْهِهَا، وَابْتِغَاءِ تَأْوِيلِهَا

the [Divine] qualities and attributes. Their names have come in the message and their indicants are clear in the creation. This is achieved by: the sight of the spiritual light, the wellness of the intellect through reflection, and the liveliness of the heart through proper inquiry that is flanked by glorification and thoughtfulness.[782] This is the recognition of the public, without which the conditions of certainty are not fulfilled. It has three pillars:

1. affirmation of the attributes in their [revealed] names without assimilation[783]
2. rejection of assimilation without negation[784]
3. despair of realizing their

[782] These people will recognize the Divine attributes that are mentioned in the Revelation and attested to by the signs in the creation through their insightful spirits, reflective intellects, and tender hearts that are contemplative and full of reverence for Him.

[783] Affirmation of the Divine attributes without assimilation (likening Him to the creations) and exoneration without negation (*ithbât bi-lâ tamtheel wa-tanzeeh bi-lâ ta'teel*).

[784] After priming our understanding with *tanzeeh,* we let the rhetorical strength and richness of the Revelation flow to our hearts unimpeded by intellectual objections.

essences and knowing their ontological reality[785]

The second level is the recognition of the *dhât* (ipseity) with the dropping of the distinction between the qualities and the ipseity,[786] and this becomes established by the

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: مَعْرِفَةُ الذَّاتِ، مَعَ إِسْقَاطِ التَّفْرِيقِ بَيْنَ الصِّفَاتِ وَالذَّاتِ، وَهِيَ تَثْبُتُ بِعِلْمِ الْجَمْعِ، وَتَصْفُو فِي مَيْدَانِ الْفَنَاءِ، وَتُسْتَكْمَلُ بِعِلْمِ الْبَقَاءِ،

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[785] *Ta'weel* has three meanings:

1. the ontological reality of a matter and its very essence or outcome
2. the *tafseer* (explanation) of its meaning; many of the earlier exegetes would call *'tafseer' 'ta'weel'*
3. the deflection of the primary (*Zâhir*) meaning in favor of a secondary (*majâzi*) one

When it comes to the Divine attributes, the first one belongs to Allah alone. The second belongs to all people who speak the language of the Revelation concerning the clear statements and the scholars well-grounded in knowledge concerning the intricate ones. The third is a subject of controversy. It is largely agreed upon that the righteous predecessors did not engage in it. They affirmed the primary meanings without assimilation or ascribing a modality to them.

[786] Commenting on a similar statement, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim says in *Madârij*:

> The intent of the sheikh and his likes of the people of uprightness is for the heart to not be consumed in witnessing only one of the attributes, but it should rather attend to the *dhât* (ipseity) that is described by all attributes of perfection and majesty. Only then will its witnessing be of the *dhât* and attributes together. There is no doubt that this station is higher than witnessing one attribute alone.

knowledge of union,[787] becomes clear in the realm of *fanâ'* (self-annihilation), and is perfected by the knowledge of *baqâ'* (subsistence); it approaches the essence of the union. It has three pillars:

1. letting the qualities dominate their indicants
2. letting the stations dominate their means
3. letting the realities dominate their expressions

وَتُشَارِفُ عَيْنَ الْجَمْعِ. وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَرْكَانٍ:

1. إِرْسَالُ الصِّفَاتِ عَلَى الشَّوَاهِدِ
2. وَإِرْسَالُ الْوَسَائِطِ عَلَى الْمَدَارِجِ
3. وَإِرْسَالُ الْعِبَارَاتِ عَلَى الْمَعَالِمِ

وهِيَ مَعْرِفَةُ الْخَاصَّةِ الَّتِي تُؤْنَسُ مِنْ أُفُقِ الْحَقِيقَةِ.

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[787] The knowledge of union is different from its essence (which will be mentioned later), which is the experience of the reality of union. This union is a perceptual one, not an ontological one. The sheikh's life and legacy were exonerated from the heresy of the monists (believers in *waḥdat al-wujood*) and unionists (*ittiḥâdiyah*). In the perceptual union, one recognizes the triviality, transience, contingency, and disposability of *as-siwâ* (everything other than God), so they do not let them distract their hearts from a complete focus on Him. In this union, the manifestations converge into the *ṣifât* (attributes), and the *ṣifât* converge into the *dhât* (ipseity). For example, so many events around us are manifestations of His mercy, power, might, and wisdom. You will witness His attributes in them, then you will witness all attributes combined in the one *dhât* (Divine ipseity). The tapestry of this existence will be one whole and your heart will be at peace.

This is the recognition of the elite, which is found in the provinces of realities.[788]

The third level is a recognition that is subsumed in the *ta'reef* (Divine teaching)[789] and this is not reached through evidences, not pointed to by indicants, and not realized by any means. It has three pillars:

1. witnessing the nearness
2. transcending knowledge[790]
3. beholding the union

It is the recognition of the elite of the elite.

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: مَعْرِفَةٌ مُسْتَغْرِقَةٌ فِي مَحْضِ التَّعْرِيفِ، لَا يُوصِلُ إِلَيْهَا الِاسْتِدْلَالُ، وَلَا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهَا شَاهِدٌ، وَلَا تَسْتَحِقُّهَا وَسِيلَةٌ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَرْكَانٍ:

1. مُشَاهَدَةِ الْقُرْبِ
2. وَالصُّعُودِ عَنِ الْعِلْمِ
3. وَمُطَالَعَةِ الْجَمْعِ

وَهِيَ مَعْرِفَةُ خَاصَّةِ الْخَاصَّةِ.

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[788] At this level, the heart will be witnessing the realities, so their verbal and universal indicants will be eclipsed by them and the means will be eclipsed by the ends.

[789] At this level, which the sheikh dedicates to self-annihilation, you do not see any of your actions, so it is never about one's own recognition, but about Allah's teaching/causing recognition *(ta'reef)*.

[790] This is not to demolish the foundation of knowledge, but to build on it.

Station 92: Annihilation
al-Fanâ' (الْفَنَاءُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Everyone upon it [the earth] will perish/vanish * And there will remain the face of your Lord...} *[ar-Raḥmân 55:26-27]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ"

Annihilation[791] in this respect refers to the complete fading of that which is

الْفَنَاءُ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ اضْمِحْلَالُ مَا دُونَ الْحَقِّ

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[791] The *fanâ'* that is often mentioned in Sufi discourse could mean one of three things. The first is the essence of worship. The second has some noble aspects necessary for one's devotion and others that are not virtuous in themselves and may be problematic. The third is completely blasphemous.

The first is the annihilation of one's wills and desires and their complete conformity with and absorption into the will of Allah. This is still not an ontological merger or union of wills, because the will is the most characteristic identifier of any being; a complete union of wills means a complete union of beings. However, this annihilation of wills *(fanâ' al-irâdât)* is about our will being entirely subservient to Allah's. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"None of you [truly] believes until his desires are subservient to that which I have brought." (Reported by aṭ-Ṭabarâni)

This is where the "heart wills not anything other than the Lord, relying on Him, worshiping Him, and everything that is related to that, and that is true and sound, and it is the essence of *tawḥeed* and devotion." (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmoo' al-Fatâwâ*, 10: 337) This type of *fanâ'* is *fanâ'* in the Divinity (*uloohiyah*) of God, and it does not

contradict in any way *baqâ'*, which is subsisting by Allah, with Allah, for Allah.

The second is the perceptual annihilation. Part of this *fanâ'* is virtuous and superior. This is where one realizes the existence of the creations, but they never obstruct him or her from beholding the Divine, the Real, the Beginner of all things and the Ultimate Effector and Controller. It is *fanâ'* in the Lordship (*ruboobiyah*) of God when you observe the creations, recognizing their contingency, transience, triviality, and disposability; they will be like glass boards that never block you from seeing through them. When they hurt or benefit you, you see His decrees and His works in their actions. Your response will be cognizant of Him, not them. This is the essence of the station of *iḥsân*, where you worship Allah as if you see Him. Can you imagine being distracted by anything else (the *siwâ*) if you are seeing Him?

There is another form of this perceptual *fanâ'*, which is the dissolution or absorption of the self into the focus of its attention, where the object of absorbed attention acquires an intimacy that belongs to the self, resulting in a state of altered consciousness and causing some people to feel the presence of God to such an extent that they may speak words of disbelief, which are called *shaṭaḥât*. While such utterances are not commendable and could be considered acts of disbelief if made outside of those states, many scholars, including Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah bestow mercy on him), maintain that those who make such utterances would be forgiven on account of their spiritual intoxication. (*Majmoo' al-Fatâwa*, 10: 340) He mentioned as an example of those *shaṭaḥât* the statement of Abu Yazeed al-Biṣtâmi, "Glory be to me."

For these utterances to be forgiven, however, certain conditions must be fulfilled. The trance should be real, not faked or pretentious, and it should be reached through *ḥalâl* means. The utterances should be short, only a few words. The person who utters them regrets them upon waking from the trance and even denies them, like Abu Yazeed (may Allah bestow His mercy on him)

used to. The person must also be observant of the *Sunnah* and compliant with the *Shari'ah* in his/her religious practice. Finally, as Imam Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies, such utterances were not reported from the best of Allah's creations: the prophets and the Companions. This is because of the strength of their recognition and intellect and their ability to behold the multiplicity of phenomena and creations while being fully aware of the oneness of the Creator, the Eternal, the Real (glorious is He). Such complete recognition protected them from being overcome by any spiritual trance. *Baqâ'* (subsistence) by Allah, with Allah, for Allah is higher than *fanâ'* (self-annihilation). It is the essence of Allah's saying, "until I love him, (so much so that) I become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees." If one sees by Allah and hears by Allah, they will see realities as they truly exist. They will never fall into confusion or illusion (*wahm*).

The third is the heretical type of *fanâ'*, which is ontological annihilation *(fanâ' al-wujood)* or annihilation of all existences other than the Divine, where it is claimed that nothing exists other than the Lord, inevitably leading to pantheism/monism. This is clearly impossible, but sadly accepted by some. Anyone who claims this type of annihilation should not eat, drink, or breathe if their annihilation into the Divine were real. This would mean that the worshiper is the worshiped and the slave is the Lord. Such heretical views can be dressed in fanciful philosophical or rhetorical arguments to mislead the masses. However, they are diametrically opposed to the Revelation and in fact, they make the Revelation irrelevant. After all, there is no difference between the worship of idols and the worship of God, for the idols, according to these views, are nothing but God. Imam Ibn Ḥajar says:

> As for *Ahl as-Sunnah*, they explained *tawḥeed* to be the rejection of assimilation and negation (likening God to His creations or stripping Him of His attributes), and this is why al-Junayd said, according to Abu al-Qâsim al-Qushayri's report, "*At-tawḥeed* is

other than the Real, with respect to knowledge, then denial, then actualization.[792] It is of three levels:

عِلْمًا ثُمَّ جَحْدًا ثُمَّ حَقًّا. وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the *fanâ'* (absorption) of the recognition into He Who is recognized, and this is the *fanâ'* of knowledge;[793] the *fanâ'* of the beholding into the Beheld, and this is the *fanâ'* of denial;[794] and the *fanâ'* of the pursuit into the actuality, and this is the *fanâ'* of actualization.[795]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى فَنَاءُ الْمَعْرِفَةِ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ، وَهُوَ الْفَنَاءُ عِلْمًا، وَفَنَاءُ الْعِيَانِ فِي الْمُعَايَنِ، وَهُوَ الْفَنَاءُ جَحْدًا، وَفَنَاءُ الطَّلَبِ فِي الْوُجُودِ، وَهُوَ الْفَنَاءُ حَقًّا.

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separating between the Eternal and the originated." (*Fatḥ al-Bâri*, 13/344)

[792] One's knowledge of Allah being the Creator and the creations being in need of Him for their mere existence makes them aware of their entitlement to nothing other than nothingness, and this is what we were before He brought us into existence. After that, one will be in a state where they lose perception of the *siwâ* (all else) and deny them. After that, the observer of these facts and states will lose themselves so their annihilation will be fully actualized.

[793] Their absorption into the *ma'roof* (the Recognized One) makes them lose sense of their own knowledge and knowing.

[794] He/she denies the *siwâ* (all else), including his/her own beholding of God.

[795] There is no doubt that the sheikh did not mean that one's pursuit of Allah ceases after finding Him in actuality. In fact, the closer one gets to Him, the more ardent is their pursuit of Him and His pleasure. The sheikh meant to say that the person will not feel their pursuit because that feeling will be absorbed into the feeling of their being with Allah. Of the words that capture the stations of *fanâ'* and *baqâ'* along with the intensity of Allah's pursuit is this beautiful

The second level is the annihilation of the beholding of the pursuit to eliminate it, and the annihilation of the

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: فَنَاءُ شُهُودِ الطَّلَبِ لِإِسْقَاطِهِ، وَفَنَاءُ شُهُودِ الْمَعْرِفَةِ

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statement of al-Junayd (may Allah bestow mercy on him) about the love of Allah:

عَبْدٌ ذَاهِبٌ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ

A servant who is detached from himself (ego)

مُتَّصِلٌ بِذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ

Attached to His Lord through His remembrance

قَائِمٌ بِأَدَاءِ حُقُوقِهِ

Constantly fulfilling His rights

نَاظِرٌ إِلَيْهِ بِقَلْبِهِ

Beholding Him with his heart

أَحْرَقَتْ قَلْبَهُ أَنْوَارُ هَيْبَتِهِ

The lights of His majesty/awe burned up his heart

وَصَفَا شُرْبُهُ مِنْ كَأْسِ وُدِّهِ

And he subsists only on the nectar of His infinite compassion

وَانْكَشَفَ لَهُ الْجَبَّارُ مِنْ أَسْتَارِ غَيْبِهِ

The *Jabbâr* (Irresistible) had manifested to him [his heart] through the veils of the unseen

فَإِنْ تَكَلَّمَ فَبِاللَّهِ

So, when he speaks, it is by Allah

وَإِنْ نَطَقَ فَعَنِ اللَّهِ

And whatever utterance he makes, it is from/about Allah

وَإِنْ تَحَرَّكَ فَبِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ

And when he moves, it is by the command of Allah

وَإِنْ سَكَنَ فَمَعَ اللَّهِ

And when he is still, he is with Allah

فَهُوَ بِاللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ وَمَعَ اللَّهِ

So, he is by Allah, for Allah, and with Allah.

beholding of recognition to eliminate it, and the annihilation of the beholding of the beholding to eliminate it.[796]

لِإِسْقَاطِها، وَفَنَاءُ شُهُودِ الْعِيَانِ لِإِسْقَاطِهِ.

The third level is the annihilation of the beholding of *fanâ'*, and this is the real *fanâ'* [whereby one will be] glimpsing at the lightning of reality, sailing through the ocean of union, and pursuing the trail of subsistence.[797]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: الْفَنَاءُ عَنْ شُهُودِ الْفَنَاءِ، وَهُوَ الْفَنَاءُ حَقًّا، شَائِمًا بَرْقَ الْعَيْنِ، رَاكِبًا بَحْرَ الْجَمْعِ، سَالِكًا سَبِيلَ الْبَقَاءِ.

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[796] Here, one is trying to lose their beholding of their knowledge, *shuhood*, and pursuit [of God].

[797] Here, one is trying to lose their beholding of their *fanâ'*, because it is only the Real that is to exist. They mean by this the mental, not ontological, reality. After this, one will be qualified to subsist by Allah, with Allah, and for Allah.

Station 93: Subsistence
al-Baqâ' (البقاء)

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{...And Allah is better and more lasting.} *[Ṭâ Hâ 20:73]*

قال الله عزّ وجلّ:
"وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى"

Subsistence is a name for what lasts after the annihilation of the indicants and their obliteration.[798] It is of three levels:

البَقَاءُ اسْمٌ لِمَا بَقِيَ بَعْدَ فَنَاءِ الشَّوَاهِدِ وَسُقُوطِهَا، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

The first level is the subsistence of the known after the obliteration of knowledge: in reality, not [only] in recognition.[799]

اَلدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى بَقَاءُ الْمَعْلُومِ بَعْدَ سُقُوطِ الْعِلْمِ عَيْنًا لَا عِلْمًا.

And the subsistence of the beheld after the obliteration of the beholding: in actuality, not [only] in expression.[800]

وَبَقَاءُ الْمَشْهُودِ بَعْدَ سُقُوطِ الشُّهُودِ وُجُودًا لَا نَعْتًا.

And the subsistence of He Who has always been by erasing that which was not.[801]

وَبَقَاءُ مَا لَمْ يَزَلْ حَقًّا بِسُقُوطِ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ مَحْوًا.

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[798] It is the annihilation of the manifestations and phenomena pointing to the Real (exalted is He) when one finds Him.

[799] The mental knowledge is what is obliterated. The servant experiences the Divine until that experience obliterates his or her knowledge of Him (i.e., their knowing).

[800] The actualization of finding the Divine will overcome the beholding of Him until that beholding vanishes.

Station 94: Ascertainment
at-Taḥqeeq (التَّحْقِيق)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{...[Allah] said: Have you not believed? He said: Yes, but [I ask] only "أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي"

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[801] The temporally originated cannot be self-subsistent. Only the Eternal without beginning is Eternal without end by Himself *(al-Qayyoom)*. The temporally originated may subsist only by Him.

After one rids themselves of the ego that keeps them away from Allah and they make Allah the focus of their attention, they will reach a point where they subsist only by Him, for Him, and with Him. This was best expressed in clear and powerful language by the most eloquent of humanity when he (ﷺ) relayed the following *hadith qudsi*:

"مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعِيذَنَّهُ"

"Whosoever shows enmity to a *wali* (friend) of Mine, then I have declared war against him. And My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved to Me than the religious duties I have obligated upon him. And My servant continues to draw near to me with *nafl* (supererogatory) deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to seek refuge with Me, I would surely grant him refuge." (Bukhari, from Abu Hurayrah)

that my heart may be satisfied...}[802] *[al-Baqarah 2:260]*

Ascertainment[803] is the distilling of your wants from the Real, then by the Real, then in the Real.[804] These are the names of its three levels.

التَّحْقِيقُ: تَلْخِيصُ مَصْحُوبِكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ، ثُمَّ بِالْحَقِّ، ثُمَّ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَهَذِهِ أَسْمَاءُ دَرَجَاتِهِ الثَّلَاثِ.

As for the first degree, it is distilling your wants from the Real, and this is when your knowledge does not contend with His.[805]

أَمَّا الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى - وَهِيَ تَلْخِيصُ مَصْحُوبِكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ - فَأَنْ لَا يُخَالِجَ عِلْمُكَ عِلْمَهُ"

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[802] Ibrâheem (peace be upon him) never doubted the power of his Lord but wanted his ascertainment to move from *'ilm al-yaqeen* (certainty of knowledge) to *'ayn al-yaqeen* (certainty of eyesight).

[803] This is when you ascertain your subsistence by Allah and distill that from the remnants staying with you of you, like your knowledge and your beholding.

[804] You ascertain what you want from Allah, then you want what you want by Him, and then you realize you did not want anything other than Him.

[805] Everything that is yours will be denied. Allah said:

"يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ"

{[Be warned of] the Day when Allah will assemble the messengers and say: What was the response you received? They will say: We have no knowledge. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen.} *(al-Mâ'idah 5:109)*

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim remarks in *Madârij* that they denied their temporal knowledge of the exteriors because it vanishes when it is compared to God's eternal and encompassing knowledge.

وَأَمَّا الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ: فَأَنْ لَا يُنَازِعَ شُهُودُكَ شُهُودَهُ.

As for the second degree, it is when your beholding does not contend with His.[806]

وَأَمَّا الدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ: أَنْ لَا يُنَاسِمَ رَسْمُكَ سَبْقَهُ فَتَسْقُطُ الشَّهَادَاتُ، وَتَبْطُلُ الْعِبَارَاتُ، وَتَفْنَى الْإِشَارَاتُ.

As for the third degree, it is when your [temporal] form does not mask His antecedence. Then the testimonies fade away, the expressions expire, and the gestures vanish.[807]

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[806] Now, after your annihilation, your beholding of Him is, in fact, His, so you attribute it to Him.

[807] When the soul travels back to the time when only Allah was and none of these other beings existed.

Station 95: Confusing
at-Talbees (التَّلْبِيس)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused.}[808] *[al-An'âm 6:9]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبِسُونَ"

At-talbees is to cover an extant being with a borrowed indicant. It is of three meanings:

The first is the Real confusing the people of dispersion by the universe, and this is by attaching the extant

التَّلْبِيسُ: تَوْرِيَةٌ بِشَاهِدٍ مُعَارٍ عَنْ مَوْجُودٍ قَائِمٍ. وَهُوَ اسْمٌ لِثَلَاثَةِ مَعَانٍ.

أَوَّلُهَا: تَلْبِيسُ الْحَقِّ بِالْكَوْنِ عَلَى أَهْلِ التَّفْرِقَةِ، وَهُوَ تَعْلِيقُهُ الْكَوَائِنَ

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[808] In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim found the verse unsuitable for the subject. Here is the larger context of it:

"وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْظَرُونَ. وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبِسُونَ."

{And they say: Why was there not sent down to him an angel? But if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided; then they would not be reprieved. * And if We had made him an angel, We would have made him [appear as] a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused.} *(al-An'âm 6:8-9)*

It is a conditional statement to explain why Allah did not send angels as messengers. People would have no power to receive directly from them in their angelical form. If they were made to come in a human form, the people would have still been confused about them. In general, Allah sent clear *(mubeen)* messages and messengers; He does not wish to confound His creatures.

events/things to the causes, places, and times; and His attaching the realizations to the means, the facts to the proofs, the rulings to the effective causes, the retribution to the offenses, and the reward to the acts of obedience. He hides the pleasure and anger that warrant the detachment and connection and that bring to fruition suffering and happiness.[809]

بِالْأَسْبَابِ وَالْأَمَاكِنِ وَالْأَحَايِينِ، وَتَعْلِيقُهُ الْمَعَارِفَ بِالْوَسَائِطِ، وَالْقَضَايَا بِالْحُجَجِ، وَالْأَحْكَامَ بِالْعِلَلِ، وَالِانْتِقَامَ بِالْجِنَايَاتِ، وَالْمَثُوبَةَ بِالطَّاعَاتِ، وَأَخْفَى الرِّضَا وَالسُّخْطَ اللَّذَيْنِ يُوجِبَانِ الْفَصْلَ وَالْوَصْلَ، وَيُظْهِرَانِ الشَّقَاوَةَ وَالسَّعَادَةَ.

The second confusion is when the people of *ghayrah* (protectiveness) cover up the times (of good deeds) and the *karâmât* (supernatural gifts) by concealing them,[810] their confusing others by [engaging with] earnings and causes, and the attachment of

وَالتَّلْبِيسُ الثَّانِي: تَلْبِيسُ أَهْلِ الْغَيْرَةِ عَلَى الْأَوْقَاتِ بِإِخْفَائِهَا، وَعَلَى الْكَرَامَاتِ بِكِتْمَانِهَا، وَالتَّلْبِيسُ بِالْمَكَاسِبِ وَالْأَسْبَابِ، وَتَعْلِيقُ الظَّوَاهِرِ بِالشَّوَاهِدِ وَالْمَكَاسِبِ تَلْبِيسًا عَلَى

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[809] All of this should be understood within the context of this life being a test. If all the realities were to be made manifest to people, there would not be a test. Some phenomena conceal the noumena (realities) behind them from those who have lack of insight. It is important here to point out that the correct position among *Ahl al-Sunnah* is that causes have power inculcated into them by God to lead to their effects. However, He has ongoing creation, ownership, and control of the causes, effects, and the causal relationship itself.

[810] They hide their good deeds and they hide any *karâmât* they receive from God unless there is a superior benefit in disclosing them, such as to support the believers and strengthen their resolve in times of distress and hardship.

phenomena to the indicants and triggers to confuse the feeble eyes and flawed intellects, while perfecting their ascertainment in belief and practice;[811] this group is a mercy from Allah for the people of dispersion and causes when they mingle with them.[812]

الْأُمُورِ الْكَوْنِيَّةِ وَالْعُقُولِ
الْعَلِيلَةِ مَعَ تَصْحِيحِ التَّحَقُّقِ
عَنْهَا وَسُلُوكِهَا وَمُعَايَنَتِهَا وَهَذِهِ
الطَّائِفَةُ رَحْمَةٌ مِنَ اللهِ عَلَى
أَهْلِ التَّفْرِقَةِ وَالْأَسْبَابِ فِي
مُخَالَطَتِهِمْ

The third confusion involves the people of establishment confusing the people out of mercy for them by engaging with the causes and to bring ease and facility to the people, not to themselves; this is the degree of the prophets, and it is for the godly imams who come from the valley of union and point to its essence.[813]

وَالتَّلْبِيسُ الثَّالِثُ: تَلْبِيسُ
أَهْلِ التَّمَكُّنِ عَلَى الْعَالَمِ،
تَرَحُّمًا عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُلَابَسَةِ
الْأَسْبَابِ، وَتَوْسِيعًا عَلَى
الْعَالَمِ، لَا لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ، وَهَذِهِ
دَرَجَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، ثُمَّ هِيَ لِلْأَئِمَّةِ
الرَّبَّانِيِّينَ، الصَّادِرِينَ عَنْ
وَادِي الْجَمْعِ، الْمُشِيرِينَ عَنْ
عَيْنِهِ.

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[811] While engaging with all the causes, they are certain of Allah's ultimate control and have complete reliance on Him.

[812] Despite the sublime condition of their interiors, their exteriors are not very different from the people, making it easy for them to benefit from their company.

[813] The sheikh may have meant that the messengers and the vanguard among the pious servants engaged with the causes only to facilitate things for people, while they knew they had no utility (fire does not burn, water does not quench, knives do not cut, etc.). Allah is in control of all things, and whether or not you engage with the causes, there will come to pass only what Allah had already decreed. If this is, in fact, what the sheikh meant, then it is problematic. The messengers came to teach us what is right, not to confuse us but to

lead us to our wellbeing in this life and salvation in the hereafter. Engaging with the causes Allah made as means to the desired ends is what is required of us. If we are hungry and refrain from eating until we die, we would be liable in His sight. Engaging with them does not compromise our faith in His control and power. It is an obedient response to His instruction. The formula is perfect and simple. Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that a man asked (concerning his camel):

"O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie it and rely (upon Allah), or leave it loose and rely (upon Allah)?

He said: (اعْقِلْهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ) Tie it and rely (upon Allah)." (at-Tirmidhi, graded ḥasan)

This is what the Prophet ﷺ consistently did. The migration from Makkah to Madinah is the epic example of the perfect mixing of engaging with the causes and reliance on Allah.

Station 96: Attainment
al-Wujood (الْوُجُود)

Allah, the Almighty, explicitly spoke of the word *'wujood'*[814] in the Qur'an; He said:

{...will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful}, *[an-Nisâ' 4:110]*

{...they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful}, *[an-Nisâ' 4:64]*

{...but finds Allah before Him...} *[an-Noor 24:39]*

أَطْلَقَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي القُرْآنِ اسْمَ الوُجُودِ صَرِيحًا فِي مَوَاضِعَ، فَقَالَ:

"يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا"

"لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا"

"وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ"

'Wujood' is a word for the attainment of the reality of a matter; it refers to three meanings:

الْوُجُودُ اسْمٌ لِلظَّفَرِ بِحَقِيقَةِ الشَّيْءِ، وَهُوَ اسْمٌ لِثَلَاثَةِ مَعَانٍ.

The first is the attainment of the

أَوَّلُهَا وُجُودُ عِلْمٍ لَدُنِّيٍّ،

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[814] The word is a verbal noun that comes from the root, '*wajada*' (found). It is about finding God or the actualization at the end of the journey. It is more than reaching Him. This would be *wuṣool* (arrival) and *waṣl* (connection). In *Madârij*, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim gives a telling parable of *wujood*. He mentions a man who set out *(qaṣada)* to get a treasure, and he traveled *(salaka)* the right path to it until he arrived *(waṣala)*, but if he were able to possess it and take it back home only then we can say that he attained *(wajada)* his treasure. *Wujood* shares the same root with *wajd* (ecstasy) that was discussed in Station 66. However, *wujood* is higher and more established than *wajd* according to the sheikh and the majority.

ladunni knowledge[815] that concludes the demonstrative knowledge[816] by the authentic Divine disclosure to you.[817]

يَقْطَعُ عُلُومَ الشَّوَاهِدِ فِي صِحَّةِ مُكَاشَفَةِ الْحَقِّ إِيَّاكَ.

The second is the real attainment of the Real, a type of attainment that is independent of the signposts.[818]

وَالثَّانِي وُجُودُ الْحَقِّ وُجُودَ عَيْنٍ، مُنْقَطِعًا عَنْ مَسَاغِ الْإِشَارَةِ.

The third is the attainment of the station of the fading of the attainment by submersion into the antecedence.[819]

وَالثَّالِثُ: وُجُودُ مَقَامِ اضْمِحْلَالِ رَسْمِ الْوُجُودِ فِيهِ بِالِاسْتِغْرَاقِ فِي الْأَوَّلِيَّةِ.

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[815] The source of this knowledge is God Himself, Who bestows it n the heart of the knower.

[816] Not that it will revoke it, but it will make it fade in comparison.

[817] The demonstrative knowledge is based on evidences. This knowledge comes from the Lord; it is compelling and irresistible, and it is a result of spiritual disclosure experienced by the sight of the heart. This refers to the experiential faith, which is higher than faith by persuasion.

[818] Because it is like eyesight, so the signposts are not needed anymore by someone who has reached his or her destination.

[819] Now your attainment of the Real is overwhelmed by your submersion into His antecedence after your soul has travelled back to the time when all these creatures did not exist, and only Allah existed, so you capture that moment and you let it subsume you; then you will not be seeing an 'attainer' and an 'attained,' but only the One, the Eternal, the Real. All of this, as we explained, is in the realm of mental conceptions.

Station 97: Stripping
at-Tajreed (التَّجْرِيدُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{...so remove your sandals...}[820] *[Ṭâ Hâ 20:12]*

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

"فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ"

Stripping[821] refers to the departure from beholding the indicants, and it is of three levels:

التَّجْرِيدُ انْخِلَاعٌ عَنْ شُهُودِ الشَّوَاهِدِ، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ.

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[820] The indirect inference of this verse that makes it suitable to quote here is that certain conditions may be attained only after fulfilling their requisites. Of these requisites is stripping that which is contrary to those conditions. Stripping the sandals was a prerequisite to enter the blessed valley; stripping one's ego and all originated things *(ḥawâdith)* is a prerequisite to admission into the Divine presence.

[821] The three-lettered root word is '*jarada*,' which is about stripping, shedding, and dispossessing. A barren desert is described as *jardâ'*. Abstraction may sometimes be translated as *tajreed*. To disconnect from the particulars and ascend to abstractions is a form of *tajreed*. A person who is impartial is called *mutajarrid* because he or she has removed his or her self-interests and biases from the equation and his or her judgment is thus unclouded by them. The heart that is *ajrad* in the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ would be translated as pure, because it is stripped of its flaws and ailments and infused with the light of faith. Dispossession and shedding of the harmful tendencies and influences of the ego is essential in *tajreed*, then stripping all realities of their covers and even indicants until you behold the Real with the eyes of your heart.

The first level is stripping the real disclosure of the earned certainty.[822]

الدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى تَجْرِيدُ عَيْنِ الْكَشْفِ عَنْ كَسْبِ الْيَقِينِ.

The second level is stripping the real union of the apprehensions of knowledge.[823]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ تَجْرِيدُ عَيْنِ الْجَمْعِ عَنْ دَرْكِ الْعِلْمِ.

The third level is purifying the deliverance from beholding the stripping.[824]

وَالدَّرَجَةُ الثَّالِثَةُ تَجْرِيدُ الْخَلَاصِ مِنْ شُهُودِ التَّجْرِيدِ.

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[822] The earned certainty is the intellectual certainty earned through demonstrative proofs that appear after rational inquiry. The Divine disclosure is the Divine being experienced by the heart; it eclipses intellectual certainty and sends it into complete oblivion because the soundness and authenticity of the latter cannot stand up to the vividness and intensity of the earlier.

[823] This is, of course, not to forsake the knowledge and its purports, but to purify the complete actualization of human potential in goodness and devotion from the hindrances of knowledge. Knowledge may result in arrogance, legalism, or super-technicality. It may hinder people from ascending in the ranks of piety and graciousness by being focused only on justice and correctness, not realizing that they are floors, not ceilings. Also, a focus on the rational and transmitted knowledge of God does not suffice to experience Him and be in His presence.

[824] As always, in this phase the sheikh wants you to have the mental experience of complete self-dissolution. This means that you lose sense of the self and anything predicated on it, including your stripping, because at this level there is no 'I' or 'my.'

Station 98: Singling
at-Tafreed (التَّفْرِيدُ)

قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:
"وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ"

Allah, the Almighty, said:
{... and they will know that it is Allah Who is the supremely evident Truth.} *[an-Noor 24:25]*

التَّفْرِيدُ: اسْمٌ لِتَخْلِيصِ الْإِشَارَةِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ، ثُمَّ بِالْحَقِّ، ثُمَّ عَنِ الْحَقِّ.

'*At-tafreed*' (singling)[825] is a word for the exclusive dedication of the allusions to the Real, then by the Real, then from the Real.

فَأَمَّا تَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ: فَعَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ: تَفْرِيدُ الْقَصْدِ عَطَشًا، ثُمَّ تَفْرِيدُ الْمَحَبَّةِ تَلَفًا، ثُمَّ تَفْرِيدُ الشُّهُودِ اتِّصَالًا.

As for the exclusive dedication of the allusions to the Real, it is of three levels: the exclusive dedication of the intent out of thirst (eagerness), then the exclusive dedication of the self-destructive love,[826] and then the exclusive dedication of the *shuhood* (witnessing) in

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825 To single Allah out as *al-fard* (the singular, unique, *sui generis*). The difference between this station and the previous one is that the previous one is about dispossessing the self and *as-siwâ* (all other than God) and this one is about a focus on the singularity of God Himself.

826 It is the love that makes the lover dissolve out of their total enthrallment.

connectedness.[827]

As for the exclusive dedication of the allusions by the Real,[828] it is of three levels:

1. exclusive dedication of the allusions by disclosing one's pride,[829]
2. by observing one's conduct,
3. and by being in constriction out of protectiveness.[830]

وَأَمَّا تَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ بِالْحَقِّ فَعَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ، تَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ بِالِافْتِخَارِ بَوْحًا، وَتَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ بِالسُّلُوكِ مُطَالَعَةً، وَتَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ بِالْقَبْضِ غَيْرَةً.

As for the exclusive dedication of the allusions from the Real,[831] it is outward expansion that entails pure constriction,[832] and this is to guide to the Real and invite to Him.[833]

وَأَمَّا تَفْرِيدُ الْإِشَارَةِ عَنِ الْحَقِّ فَانْبِسَاطٌ بِبَسْطِ ظَاهِرٍ يَتَضَمَّنُ قَبْضًا خَالِصًا، لِلْهِدَايَةِ إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَالدَّعْوَةِ إِلَيْهِ.

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827 This is about singling out the Intended (not the intent, which was already purified in the station of *tajreed*) and the Beloved (not the love), and the Beheld (not the beholding). Notice that it begins by the exclusive dedication of the allusions to the Real.

828 As usual, in this phase you disavow your influence and power and realize that your actions are His.

829 You are proud of His favors, not to boast but to speak of His graciousness.

830 Your protectiveness of your inner state and connection with the Lord makes you constricted from and averse to *as-siwâ* (all other than God).

831 Now you are not the pointer, but He is. You are the tool.

832 You are outwardly cheerful and easygoing, but inwardly full of fear of and reverence for Him.

833 You use your expansion and affability to reach out to people and invite them to Allah.

Station 99: Union
al-Jam' (الْجَمْعُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said: قَالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

{...And you threw not, [O Muhammad], when you threw, but it was Allah who threw...} *[al-Anfâl 8:17]* "وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللهَ رَمَىٰ"

Union[834] is that which ends all dispersion, terminates all allusions, الْجَمْعُ: مَا أَسْقَطَ التَّفْرِقَةَ، وَقَطَعَ الْإِشَارَةَ، وَشَخَصَ عَنِ

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[834] *Jam'* (جمع): union, unity, gathering, togetherness with Allah.

The valid concept of union (which is different from the heretical beliefs of *ḥulool* and *ittiḥâd*, translated as Divine indwelling and union) is when your will conforms completely to His so you are one with Him in purpose, uniting and dedicating of all your love, reliance, and obedience to Him, the only deity worthy of worship (*uloohiyah*). It also refers to the state of being with Allah, cut off from worldly pursuits and cravings. Additionally, it refers to observing the unity of *ruboobiyah* (Lordship): the oneness of the Real, the Eternal, the First, the Origin, the Source, the Ultimate Effector, the Self-Sufficient One, and observing that while all else (*ghayr*) is true because He is the True Creator, they are contingent upon His will and manifestations of it. All events in the universe are also real but again, they are nothing but products and manifestations of His names.

Farq فرق (separation, distinction, difference, variance) is the opposite of *jam'*. When it means separation from Him or *tafarruq* تفرق (meaning diversion, dispersion, and distractibility), it is obviously negative. However, when it means distinction (as when one observes the multiplicity of the creations and created phenomena), then it is not negative unless it causes *tafarruq*.

looks beyond the water and clay[835] after true establishment, clearance of variation,[836] deliverance from

الْمَاءِ وَالطِّينِ، بَعْدَ صِحَّةِ التَّمْكِينِ، وَالْبَرَاءَةِ مِنَ التَّلْوِينِ، وَالْخَلَاصِ مِنْ شُهُودِ التَّنَوِيَّةِ، وَالتَّنَافِي مِنْ إِحْسَاسِ الِاعْتِلَالِ،

One must be aware of *jam'* and *farq* in the sense that he or she must observe the multiplicity from their angle, because what Allah wants form us varies according to our circumstances. For example, one must distinguish between His commands and prohibitions and His decrees that He likes—such as the faithfulness of the believers—and His decrees that He dislikes—such as the rejection of the disbelievers. Noticing the *farq* (variances, differences, distinctions, multiplicity) in these things is essential while acknowledging the unity of the Origin, the Maker, the Owner, and the Controller, and working towards your *jam'* (togetherness) with Him. The observation of these differences will enable you to move to the highest level of *'uboodiyah* (servitude), where your highest pursuit is not what you want from your Lord, but what He wants from you. The comforting intimacy (*uns*) you feel during *dhikr* (remembrance) will not then keep you from walking to the *masjid* to catch the *jamâ'ah* (congregational prayer) or entertaining your guests when they arrive or tending to the needs of your family, etc. You are doing all that because it is what He wants of you in those circumstances. Your distinction between good and evil will keep you from being indifferent to them, but your realization that all are His creations will allow you to defer to His wisdom and keep your heart at ease, knowing that He is in control and trusting His plans while working in compliance with His command to promote what is good and fight what is evil.

[835] Looking beyond matter, or beyond the connections with other humans, which are the most ardent attachments that hold us back from realizing our spiritual potential.

[836] Being influenced by worldly variables and having variable conditions of the heart.

beholding the duality and suffering the faultiness,[837] and ceasing to observe all of them. It is of three levels:

وَالسَّلْبِ مِنْ شُهُودِ شُهُودِهَا، وَهُوَ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ دَرَجَاتٍ: جَمْعُ عِلْمٍ، ثُمَّ جَمْعُ وُجُودٍ، ثُمَّ جَمْعُ عَيْنٍ.

1. the union of knowledge,
2. then the union of actuality,
3. then the essence of union.

As for the union of knowledge, it is the utter vanishing of the knowledge of demonstrative proofs into the *ladunni* knowledge.[838]

فَأَمَّا جَمْعُ الْعِلْمِ: فَهُوَ تَلَاشِي حُكُومِ الشَّوَاهِدِ فِي الْعِلْمِ اللَّدُنِّيِّ صِرْفًا.

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[837] He probably means the duality of the Creator and creation, the command and decree, the cause and the effect, the good and the evil, and ascending to beholding the Source alone. This is correct as far it refers to the heart's certainty in the oneness of the Source, but not that the distinction between His decrees (such as the disbelief of the disbelievers and His commands like faith and obedience) is inferior. In fact, this is an essential requirement of faith. It also does not mean that the proper engagement of the causes is inferior. This was the way of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Observing the cause and effect keeps our feet firm on the ground, aware of our realities, fulfilling the agency that He entrusted us with; but stopping there creates dualism in the heart, which may see the causes as final effectors or effective in and by themselves. This dualism may be healed only by observing the Creator of all things as the first and final Cause and Creator of all causes, effects, and causal relationships.

[838] The knowledge of demonstrative proofs of Allah's written and seen signs is the basis of knowledge. It is not to be replaced by the Divine inspiration of the hearts of the knowers but only

As for the union of actuality, it is the complete dissolution of the end of connectedness into the essence of actualization.[839]

وَأَمَّا جَمْعُ الْوُجُودِ: فَهُوَ تَلَاشِي نِهَايَةِ الِاتِّصَالِ فِي عَيْنِ الْوُجُودِ مَحْقًا.

As for the essence of union, it is the real vanishment of the referents of allusions into the essence of the Real.[840]

وَأَمَّا جَمْعُ الْعَيْنِ: فَهُوَ تَلَاشِي كُلِّ مَا تُقِلُّهُ الْإِشَارَةُ فِي ذَاتِ الْحَقِّ حَقًّا.

Union is the end of all stations of the seekers, and it is the shoreline of the ocean of *tawḥeed*.

وَالْجَمْعُ: غَايَةُ مَقَامَاتِ السَّالِكِينَ، وَهُوَ طَرَفُ بَحْرِ التَّوْحِيدِ.

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complemented and augmented. However, experiential faith is the one that is never shaken.

[839] Refer to Station 89: *al-Ittiṣâl*. In the pursuit of complete annihilation of the ego, which the sheikh seems to consider a necessary phase, the allusions in the third phase of this station will now also vanish in the actualization of complete return to the point of pre-eternal singularity.

[840] As usual, in this phase the sheikh invites to complete mental self-annihilation, where there are no allusions and referents because there is no one to allude or refer to.

Station 100: Oneness
at-Tawḥeed (التَّوْحِيدُ)

Allah, the Almighty, said:

{Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him...} *[Âl 'Imrân 3:18]*

Tawḥeed[841] is the exoneration of Allah above originated things.[842] The scholars

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[841] *Tawḥeed* is a transitive verbal noun. *Tawheed Allah* (pronounced as *tawḥeed-ullâh*) means recognizing and declaring God as one and acting accordingly. Oneness does not capture all these meanings, neither does singling or monism (which also has some negative connotations). Unification also has negative connotations. We will use oneness here, but it is important to recognize that there is no perfect translation for the acquired meanings of '*tawḥeed*' in our Islamic heritage.

[842] Ibn Ḥajar says:

"وَمَا أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ فَفَسَّرُوا التَّوْحِيدَ بِنَفْيِ التَّشْبِيهِ وَالتَّعْطِيلِ وَمِنْ ثَمَّ قَالَ الْجُنَيْدُ فِيمَا حَكَاهُ أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ الْقُشَيْرِيُّ التَّوْحِيدُ إِفْرَادُ الْقَدِيمِ مِنَ الْمُحْدَثِ."

As for *Ahl as-Sunnah*, they explained *tawḥeed* to be the rejection of assimilation and negation (likening God to His creations or stripping Him of His attributes), and this is why al-Junayd said, according to what Abu al-Qâsim al-Qushayri reported, "*At-tawḥeed* is separating between the Eternal and the originated." (*Fatḥ al-Bâri*, 13/344)

Knowing the difference between the eternal Creator and the originated creation is at the foundation of *tawḥeed*, and it would then require separating between His attributes and theirs and His rights and theirs, and singling Him out as the one Lord and only deity worthy or worship.

نَطَقَ الْعُلَمَاءُ بِمَا نَطَقُوا بِهِ، وَأَشَارَ الْمُحَقِّقُونَ بِمَا أَشَارُوا بِهِ فِي هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ لِقَصْدِ تَصْحِيحِ التَّوْحِيدِ، وَمَا سِوَاهُ مِنْ حَالٍ أَوْ مَقَامٍ، فَكُلُّهُ مَصْحُوبٌ بِالْعِلَلِ.

spoke of that which they spoke of, and the verifiers pointed to that which they pointed to in this path for nothing other than to correct *at-tawḥeed*. Anything else, whether it is a state or a station, is all flawed.[843] *Tawḥeed* is of three meanings:

وَالتَّوْحِيدُ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَوْجُهٍ. الْوَجْهُ الْأَوَّلُ: تَوْحِيدُ الْعَامَّةِ، الَّذِي يَصِحُّ بِالشَّوَاهِدِ، وَالْوَجْهُ الثَّانِي: تَوْحِيدُ الْخَاصَّةِ، وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَثْبُتُ بِالْحَقَائِقِ، وَالْوَجْهُ الثَّالِثُ: تَوْحِيدٌ قَائِمٌ بِالْقِدَمِ، وَهُوَ تَوْحِيدُ خَاصَّةِ الْخَاصَّةِ.

1. the first is the *tawḥeed* of the public that gets rectified by the indicants
2. the second is the *tawḥeed* of the elite, which is confirmed by the realities
3. the third is the *tawḥeed* that is established from eternity, and this is the *tawḥeed* of the elite of the elite

فأما التَّوْحِيدُ الْأَوَّلُ فهو شَهَادةُ أَنَّ لا إله إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ الأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ الذي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَد وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ.

As for the first *tawḥeed*, it is the testimony that there is no God but Allah, alone, no partner does He have, the Absolute, who neither begets nor is begotten, nor is there to Him any equivalent. This is the apparent, self-

وهُوَ التَّوْحِيدُ الظَّاهِرُ

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[843] We have discussed the different flaws of the varied stations before. It seems that the sheikh means to say that they are all flawed because they still entail some self-awareness or recognition. To him, complete deliverance from the self and the *siwâ* (that which is other than Allah) is necessary. We explained previously that the awareness is not blameworthy except when it detracts from our focus on Allah (exalted is He) and devotion to Him.

evident *tawḥeed* which wipes out the major shirk. It is the *tawḥeed* upon which the *qiblah* was set[844] and allegiance is deserved;[845] and for which life and property are spared;[846] and the land of disbelief becomes separate from the land of Islam; and the religion of the public becomes validated, even if they cannot justify it with demonstrative proofs,[847] and this is after they become clear of misconception, ambivalence, and doubt, upon a truthful testimony that is validated by the acceptance of the heart.[848] This is the *tawḥeed* of the public that is proven by the indicants, and the indicants are the message and the

الْجَلِيُّ، الَّذِي نَفَى الشِّرْكَ الْأَعْظَمَ، وَعَلَيْهِ نُصِبَتْ الْقِبْلَةُ وَبِهِ وَجَبَتْ الذِّمَّةُ وَبِهِ حُقِنَتْ الدِّمَاءُ وَالْأَمْوَالُ وَانْفَصَلَتْ بِهِ دَارُ الْكُفْرِ مِنْ دَارِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَصَحَّتْ بِهِ الْمِلَّةُ لِلْعَامَّةِ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَقُومُوا بِحُسْنِ الِاسْتِدْلَالِ بَعْدَ أَنْ يَسْلَمُوا مِنَ الشُّبْهَةِ، وَالْحَيْرَةِ، وَالرَّيْبَةِ بِصِدْقِ شَهَادَةٍ صَحَّحَهَا قَبُولُ الْقَلْبِ.

وَهَذَا تَوْحِيدُ الْعَامَّةِ، الَّذِي يَصِحُّ بِالشَّوَاهِدِ، وَالشَّوَاهِدُ هِيَ الرِّسَالَةُ وَالصَّنَائِعُ، وَيَجِبُ بِالسَّمْعِ،

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844 To unite those who profess this *tawḥeed*.

845 Allegiance for the believers in His oneness.

846 The combatant enemies spare their lives by the utterance of the testimony of faith. This is not to mean that the life and property of those who do not profess that testimony are not sacred; if they are not combatant enemies, their mere peacefulness renders their lives and property sacred.

847 People with natural and experiential faith may not always be capable of debating disbelievers and proving their convictions with demonstrative proofs. God does not demand that of them.

848 The testimony of the tongue coupled with the acceptance of the heart makes a person a believer.

creations.[849] It becomes binding by hearing [the message],[850] it is attained by the Real's display,[851] and it thrives on the demonstration of the indicants.[852]

وَيُوجَدُ بِتَبْصِيرِ الْحَقِّ، وَيَنْمُو عَلَى مَشَاهِدِ الشَّوَاهِدِ.

As for the second *tawḥeed*, which is confirmed by [beholding] the realities,[853] it is the *tawḥeed* of the elite; it is the dropping of the apparent causes,[854] ascending above the contentions of the intellects[855] and reliance on the indicants.[856] It is to not rely on the proofs

وَأَمَّا التَّوْحِيدُ الثَّانِي، الَّذِي يَثْبُتُ بِالْحَقَائِقِ فَهُوَ تَوْحِيدُ الْخَاصَّةِ، وَهُوَ إِسْقَاطُ الْأَسْبَابِ الظَّاهِرَةِ، وَالصُّعُودُ عَنْ مُنَازَعَاتِ الْعُقُولِ، وَعَنِ التَّعَلُّقِ بِالشَّوَاهِدِ، وَهُوَ أَنْ لَا يَشْهَدَ

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[849] The signs Allah provided for us in His Book and through His creations. They all point to His oneness and uniqueness.

[850] Anyone who is capable of understanding the message of the Qur'an becomes liable upon hearing it.

[851] Those to whom Allah shows the realities will see them.

[852] The more signs one observes, the more certainty they develop, as in the evidentialist faith acquisition.

[853] Refer to the section on The Realities in this book.

[854] Dropping them does not mean denying them but focusing on their Creator (exalted is He).

[855] To accept what Allah tells us as the ultimate truth and to conform to what He commands us. There is never an intractable conflict between pure reason and established revelation. The apparent conflicts result either from error or from overconfidence in our intellects.

[856] Evidentialist faith may be superseded by natural and experiential faith, but it is an integral part of faith that should not be neglected. The whole universe points to God. The messages of the messengers point to Him. Most importantly, He points to Himself. The sheikh means to say that when you reach your destination, you

in *tawḥeed*, the causes in reliance, or the means in salvation,[857] so one would be beholding the antecedence of the Real with His wisdom and knowledge, and His placing things where they belong and making them contingent on their right times and hiding them in their forms.[858] [The seeker] would have mastered the recognition of the flaws[859] and now looks beyond the originated matters. This is the *tawḥeed* of the elite, which is rectified by the knowledge of self-

فِي التَّوْحِيدِ دَلِيلًا، وَلَا فِي التَّوَكُّلِ سَبَبًا، وَلَا لِلنَّجَاةِ وَسِيلَةً، فَيَكُونُ مُشَاهِدًا سَبْقَ الْحَقِّ بِحُكْمِهِ وَعِلْمِهِ، وَوَضْعِهِ الْأَشْيَاءَ مَوَاضِعَهَا وَتَعْلِيقِهِ إِيَّاهَا بِأَحَايِينِهَا، وَإِخْفَائِهِ إِيَّاهَا فِي رُسُومِهَا، وَتَحَقُّقِ مَعْرِفَةِ الْعِلَلِ، وَيَسْلُكُ سَبِيلَ إِسْقَاطِ الْحَدَثِ، هَذَا تَوْحِيدُ الْخَاصَّةِ، الَّذِي يَصْلُحُ بِعِلْمِ الْفَنَاءِ، وَيَصْفُو فِي عِلْمِ

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do not need the signposts. This is true, but at the same time, you do not deny the signposts that led you to your destination; you continue to appreciate their role and point them out to those who may benefit from them.

857 While realizing that the causes are means to their ends by the creation of Allah, that faith and obedience are means to salvation by the grace of Allah, and by engaging the causes and adhering to faith, you keep your focus on the Creator and the Bestower of graces.

858 You behold His beginning-less knowledge and infinite wisdom in creating all those causes and causal relationships. Those deprived of insight see nothing beyond these forms and causal relationships. They do not see the pre-eternal decree of the First preceding all of this.

859 People who are blessed with beholding the realities will see through all of the stations on the path and recognize the flaws that are encountered in each of them.

annihilation[860] and purified by the knowledge of union[861] and attracts to the *tawḥeed* of the masters of union.

الْجَمْعِ، وَيَجْذِبُ إِلَى تَوْحِيدِ أَرْبَابِ الْجَمْعِ.

As for the third *tawḥeed,* it is a *tawḥeed* that the Real kept for Himself.[862] He [alone] is entitled to it because of His majesty. He displayed a flash of it to the inner souls of His most chosen and He made them unable of describing it and communicating it.[863] This is what is

وَأَمَّا التَّوْحِيدُ الثَّالِثُ فَهُوَ تَوْحِيدٌ اخْتَصَّهُ الْحَقُّ لِنَفْسِهِ، وَاسْتَحَقَّهُ لِقَدْرِهِ، وَأَلَاحَ مِنْهُ لَائِحًا إِلَى أَسْرَارِ طَائِفَةٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ صَفْوَتِهِ، وَأَخْرَسَهُمْ عَنْ نَعْتِهِ، وَأَعْجَزَهُمْ عَنْ بَثِّهِ. وَالَّذِي يُشَارُ إِلَيْهِ عَلَى

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[860] For the complete mental focus on the One, even the self must be driven away from the focus.

[861] See the previous station (99).

[862] This section has some ambiguous statements that could easily be misunderstood. Our knowledge of the sheikh's uprightness and compliance with the *Shari'ah* in creed and practice gives us the right to give them the best interpretation that could be understood from them. There is no doubt that the prophets and messengers, particularly the greatest of them, have established the *tawḥeed* of Allah required of His servants, and many of His righteous servants have also done so. However, the greatest *muwaḥḥid* (ﷺ) said:

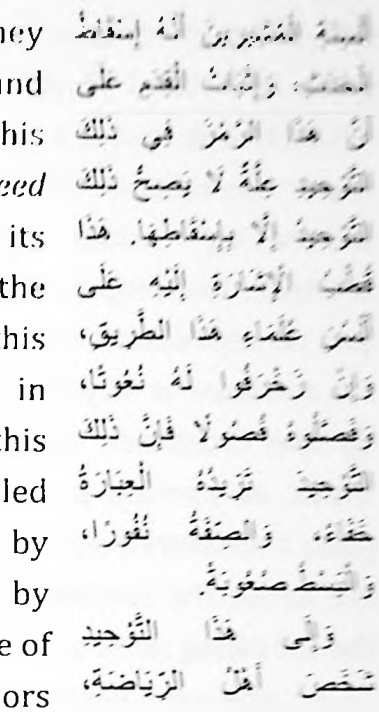
"لاَ أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ"

"I cannot praise You enough, You are as You have praised yourself." (Muslim)

In light of this, we will attempt to understand what the sheikh means in this section.

[863] If this means that they cannot describe the proper *tawḥeed,* then it is problematic. The books of Allah were all revealed to detail it and His messengers all clarified it. The greatest of them, Muhammad ﷺ, explained it in the most perfect way possible.

referred to by the guides when they speak of dropping the originated and affirming the Pre-Eternal. However, this very metaphor is a flaw in this *tawḥeed* that must be dropped for its rectification.[864] This is the core of the metaphors used by the scholars of this path, no matter how they excel in describing it and classifying it, for this *tawḥeed* becomes only more concealed by explaining it and more evasive by describing it and more difficult by detailing it. On this *tawḥeed* the people of spiritual refinement and the possessors



However, if the sheikh means that they cannot describe the nature of al-*Wâḥid* (the One), then of course it is true.

[864] The sheikh probably means that the mere mental recognition of the originated matters is a flaw, of which one needs to be cured. We have explained before that the awareness of the realities as they exist, which does not cause *tafarruq* (dispersion) of the heart, is the way of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions (see the previous station). The sheikh was a strict Hanbali *faqeeh* and scripturalist theologian. The philosophical *taṣawwuf* of the Divine indwelling and ontological union cannot hijack his legacy. Additionally, ontological union has nothing to do with the pure *taṣawwuf* of Islam, but has been corrupted by the imported concepts of emanationism, pantheism, and monism. Finally, it has nothing to do with reason, because the denial of one's existence, while it may look intellectual, is entirely incoherent. David Hume, a famous philosopher, said, "Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy be still a man."

of [sublime] spiritual states fixate their gaze; it is what those who glorify [the Divine] seek and it is what the speakers about the essence of union refer to and concerning which the metaphors collapse. No tongue has ever depicted it and no expression has ever pointed to it, for *tawḥeed* is beyond being pointed to by the creatures, apprehended by the times, or carried by the causes. In the past, I answered an inquirer who asked me about the *tawḥeed* of the Sufis with the following verses of poetry:

وَأَرْبَابُ الْأَحْوَالِ وَإِلَيْهِ قَصَدَ أَهْلُ التَّعْظِيمِ، وَإِيَّاهُ عَنَى الْمُتَكَلِّمُونَ فِي عَيْنِ الْجَمْعِ، وَعَلَيْهِ تَصْطَلِمُ الْإِشَارَاتُ، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْطِقْ عَنْهُ لِسَانٌ، وَلَمْ تُشِرْ إِلَيْهِ عِبَارَةٌ. فَإِنَّ التَّوْحِيدَ وَرَاءَ ما يُشِيرُ إليه مُكَوِّنٌ أو يَتَعَاطَاهُ حِينٌ أو يُقِلُّهُ سَبَبٌ. وَقَدْ أَجَبْتُ فِي سَالِفِ الزَّمَانِ سَائِلًا سَأَلَنِي عَنْ تَوْحِيدِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ بهذه الْقَوَافِي الثَّلَاثِ:

No one ever singled the One out...for everyone who did is a denier[865]

مَا وَحَّدَ الْوَاحِدَ مِنْ وَاحِدٍ ... إِذْ كُلُّ مَنْ وَحَّدَهُ جَاحِدُ

The *tawḥeed* of he who speaks of His nature...is but a loan that was dismissed by the One[866]

تَوْحِيدُ مَنْ يَنْطِقُ عَنْ نَعْتِهِ ... عَارِيَةٌ أَبْطَلَهَا الْوَاحِدُ

His singling out of Himself is the real

تَوْحِيدُهُ إِيَّاهُ تَوْحِيدُهُ ... وَنَعْتُ مَنْ يَنْعَتُهُ لَاحِدُ

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[865] We should understand this to mean that no one gives Him His due right, and anyone who thinks they can is a denier of His majesty and ineffable nature that only He knows and only He can tell us enough about, within our categories of understanding, to recognize Him.

[866] This would be best understood to mean that even our actions and devotion are nothing but His creations; this includes our very *tawḥeed* of Him. Again, this does not mean that humans have no agency at all, however; they must recognize that Allah created them and their agency and actions.

tawheed of Him ...and the descriptions of His describers is false.[867]

[867] The way we may give this verse a proper interpretation, as Imam Ibn al-Qayyim says, is to say that any description of Him other than what He described Himself with is a deviation; it may also be said that He alone knows the quiddity of His essence and attributes. so while we ought to describe Him as He described Himself. we must be certain that we cannot conceive His majestic essence.

Translator's Conclusion

Many people did not know the names of most of the stations in this book, yet they were established in all of them. Many people knew all the stations and their intricate details, yet they never got to visit them. The choice is ours.

Nontes: